The Rev J. A. Harriss MA

159. Banbury Road

with the kind regards of

A. M. Christopher

4 Norham Road

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THE BIBLE UNDER TRIAL

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Apologetic Papers

IN VIEW OF PRESENT-DAY ASSAULTS ON HOLY SCRIPTURE

BY

JAMES ORR, D.D.

PROFESSOR OF APOLOGETICS AND SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY IN THE UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path"

—*Ps. cxix. 49*

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Preface

THE Papers composing this volume were prepared in response to urgent request as a popular apologetic series in defence of the Bible from the attacks made on it from different quarters. They are now published in the hope that they may do something to steady the minds of those who are in perplexity owing to the multitude and confusion of the opinions that prevail in these times regarding the Sacred Book. The Papers are written from the standpoint of faith in the Bible as the inspired and authoritative record for us of God's revealed will. The author has no sympathy with the view which depreciates the authority of Scripture in order to exalt over against it the authority of Christ. He does not acknowledge that there is any collision between the two things, or that they can be really severed, the one from the other. He finds the Word of God and of Christ *in* the Scriptures, and knows no other source of acquaintance with it. As designed for the general Christian reader, the Papers make no pretence to exhaustive treatment. They confine themselves to tracing broad outlines of defence and vindication. For fuller discussion, from his own point of view, of the topics dealt with, the author may refer to his books on

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The Christian View of God and the World (8th Edition), *The Problem of the Old Testament* (4th Edition), and *God's Image in Man and its Defacement* (3rd Edition). His earnest prayer is that these pages may be found of assistance to some who may feel that their feet have been sliding beneath them.

The author acknowledges his indebtedness to Ebenezer Russell, Esq., Glasgow, for valuable aid in the correction of the proofs.

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I

The Present Day Trial of the Bible

The Present Day Trial of the Bible

IT may be a suitable opening for these papers to consider how the case stands to-day with the trial of the Bible as the written Word of God. There are misconceptions and alarms prevalent which a calm outlook on the actual situation may do something to remove and abate. I would fain speak a word to remove the disquietude under which many labour, as if Christianity and God's Word were at length about to be engulfed in the encroaching waves of scepticism. There is conflict enough, but no such consequence as this is going to follow.

"The word of the Lord," the Psalm says, "is tried" (Ps. xviii. 30). Again, "The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, purified seven times" (Ps. xii. 6). The Bible, least of all, need shrink from this ordeal of trial; nor does it. God never asks His people to put their trust in, or stay their souls on, that which cannot endure the most searching fires of trial.

The supremest test, of course, to which the Bible can be put is—

THE TEST OF EXPERIENCE.

Does its message commend itself on personal trial to mind, and conscience, and heart? Does it verify

itself, when accepted, in heart and life? Does it prove able to bear the weight which innumerable souls through long ages have rested on it? Does it show itself, historically, possessed of the properties which, as an inspired Word, are claimed for it—those, for example, in Ps. xix. 7, 8, of converting the soul, making wise the simple, enlightening the eyes; or in 2 Tim. iii. 15, 17, of making wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, of being profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, "that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." He that has this witness of God's Word in himself (1 John v. 10) need fear no assault from without. We move here in a region high as heaven itself above all debatable questions of science and criticism.

It is not this test of experience, however, I mean to dwell on at present, though it will often recur in our discussions, but rather

THE OUTWARD TRIAL,

to which the Bible in our day is exposed—the trial of opposition, of conflict, of controversy.

I.

And here the first thing we need to remind ourselves of is that this trial of God's Word by outward assault is nothing new; God's Word has been a tried word in all ages. There never has been a time in history when it has not had to encounter fierce and persistent opposition. If, then, we see unbelief lifting up its head in many directions in these latter days, we need not be perplexed and dismayed, as if some strange thing had happened to us. It lies in the nature of things, and is God's will, that it should be so; it is part

of the fiery trial of our faith (1 Pet. i. 7), and the chief way by which the imperishable truth of God's Word is made manifest. People are astonished that, if Christianity be true, it should be impugned by multitudes as it is. They forget. In Isaiah's day God declared that the stone He would lay in Zion as a sure foundation would be "a tried stone" (Is. xxviii. 16). God did not anticipate that this stone, being planted there, would remain there without being put to test or trial. It was not a stone which God was to lay, and no one dispute the laying of it; not a stone that God was to lay, and no one refuse to build upon it; not a stone that God was to lay, and no one contest its right to be there. If it was a foundation stone, it was at the same time to be a tried stone, and in the trial was to be proved to be the stone of God's laying more clearly than ever. He who realises this, the prophet says, "will not make haste" –will not readily be thrown into panic or anxiety when new forms of opposition make their appearance. As the Apostle Peter gives the sense of the words, he will "not be put to shame" (1 Pet. ii. 16).

This fact that God's Word has been

A TRIED WORD IN ALL AGES

would admit of easy demonstration were this the place to trace its history, and in it lies strong encouragement for our faith to-day. The Lord Himself was continually met in the preaching of His Gospel by the hostility and opposition of Scribes and Pharisees, who thought, finally, they had got rid of Him by condemning Him to the Cross which proved to be His throne of empire. The ministry of the Apostles was a continual experience of opposition and persecution. And what of after times? We are apt to think that in an age like ours, with its formidable new weapons of assault on revealed truth, the

conflict of faith with unbelief is far keener and more deadly than in any previous time. But this is largely due to lack of perspective.

Does anyone, for example, who knows the conditions of

THE SECOND CENTURY,

think that the sceptical and subtle pagans of that age had not their eyes on all the weak points—or what they took to be the weak points—of our religion, when they wrote those books and satires, some of which still remain, as clever and witty, relatively to their time, as anything in the artillery of unbelief to-day. The second century was, indeed, to an extent not always realised, an era of strenuous conflict for the truth. It was marked not only by the outward martyr conflict with paganism, and by the keen literary attacks just referred to, but by the all-pervading influences of a subtle Oriental theosophy, which, had they prevailed, would speedily have dissipated historical Christianity into empty phantasies. The controversy with Gnosticism was largely a conflict about Scripture. The Scriptures were the direct object of attack—the Old Testament in its entirety, as being, so it was held, the revelation of an inferior and immoral deity; the New Testament in considerable part, and wholly as regarded its historical truth. This, too, in an age when the Church was yet young and feeble, and its Canon of Scripture only yet in process of formation. When the era of pagan persecution closed, it was again with a determined effort to crush out the life of the Church by compelling the surrender and destruction of its Scriptures.

Or glance at

THE MIDDLE AGES,

the latter part of which witnessed the attempt of the Roman Church to suppress the reading and circulation of

the Bible among the laity. It is customary to speak of these ages of the ascendency of the Church as the "Ages of Faith"; but does anyone think that there was no scepticism in Europe as the result of that great outburst of learning and of new ideas that broke upon the world in that period? Dr. Liddon has justly said: "It may fairly be questioned whether the publicly proclaimed unbelief of modern times is really more general or more pronounced than the secret, but active and deeply penetrating scepticism which during considerable portions of the middle ages laid such hold upon the intellect of Europe."* The renaissance of paganism in the fifteenth century literally honeycombed Europe with new and bizarre forms of unbelief, while the Church which should have resisted it was sunk in deadliest corruption. Yet in pious circles the study of God's Word never wholly died out, and translations into the speech of the people were made, and circulated, mostly secretly, in the chief European countries. Thus was prepared the way for the grand revival of the Reformation, flinging open once more the gates of the knowledge of Holy Scripture; and great was the joy with which the enfranchised Church entered on its inheritance.

But soon the sky was again clouded. Philosophy and science made rapid advances as the result of that very emancipation of the human intellect which the Reformation had fostered, and ere long the seeds of a new rationalism began to be sown in the bosom of the Church, with effects disastrous to reverent faith in the Scriptures.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

was the peculiar era of this older rationalism in all the countries of Europe, and, in its various forms of a

*Bampton Lectures on *Our Lord's Divinity*, p. 123 (5th Edition).

rampart Deism in England, of Voltaireism in France, of the superficial rationalism of the "Illumination" in Germany, it ate into the vitals of these countries, and for a time made Christianity almost a name of mockery in cultivated circles.

What religion was in England in this period may be learned from the often-quoted passage from Bishop Butler's "Advertisement" to his "Analogy of Religion." "It has come," he says, "I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject for inquiry; but that it is now, at length, discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."

Will it be said by the most pessimistic that there is anything like this among us to-day? On the contrary, we have to-day, I dare to say, more aggressive work on the part of the Christian Church than almost in any previous age. The Church of Christ to-day, notwithstanding all these forces of unbelief we hear of around us, has more members, is circulating more Bibles, is doing more good, is extending itself more widely in the world, is cherishing in its heart more earnestly the dream of universal empire, than at any previous period of its history! Only it is doing this on the ground of the old Evangel, not on the ground of the new theories of religion and of the Bible. Let us thank God for it, and not be downcast.

II.

In this connection it is interesting to recall the causes which, in these different ages, brought about

from an enthralling scepticism and irreligion. The present age has abounding faith in "scholarship." When a scholar speaks about the Bible, let no man peep or mutter. And I should assuredly be the last to seem to throw any slight on sound and accurate scholarship. Let scholars be fought by all means with the weapons of scholars.

But it is very much to the point to observe that it has never been by learning, by philosophy, by science, by scholarship, that the Church has been revived and saved in eras of great religious laxity and abounding infidelity. When Jesus introduced His religion into the world He did not choose "scholars," but humble, simple-minded men, attached to Himself by a living faith, and endued with power from on high, to do it, as witnesses to His words, works, and resurrection. "The base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that He might bring to nought the things that are" (1 Cor. i. 28).

And what has been the verdict of history on this method? Has it not justified it in the most emphatic way? Surely it is the greatest thing we can say about these first disciples of Jesus—the most convincing testimony we can bear to their own greatness—that they had the eyes to see, that when the wise men of the world of that time were blinded, and could not see, they had the power to discern something of the meaning, the importance, the world-wide significance of this great appearance in their midst; that they had the power to take, in some degree, the measure of that great spiritual movement which the heads of the people, the Caiaphases, Pilates, Scribes and Pharisees, Rabbis, were all blind to, and could only set down to some passing spasm of

superstition! They took in some degree the measure of the spiritual greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and saw something of what His Person and work really meant for men; saw that there was laid in Him the foundation of a great world-wide religion; that bound up in Him were hopes grand and glorious beyond expression for the individual and the race! This is their eternal title to honour. By means of it they became the instruments of a revolution which changed the face of the world. God hid it from "the wise and prudent," but revealed it "unto babes" (Matt. xi. 25).

So when we come to the later age of the Reformation, what brought the remedy for the unbelief and spiritual evils under which that age groaned? Not scholarship or science, but the discovery in Scripture and faithful proclamation of the living Gospel of the grace of God by Luther and his fellow-reformers, men who had felt its power in their own souls.

And once more, what rescued the Church from the torpor and death of the negation of the eighteenth century? The deliverance came, not from philosophy or learning, not even from the works of able apologists like Butler, but from the tides of

THE SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

that swept over Britain, and were felt in other lands, under the preaching of such men as Whitefield and the Wesleys. This it was which gave evangelism the victory once more over indifference and unbelief, and breathed the new breath of life into society which introduced the era of missions to the heathen, Bible diffusion, home evangelisation, and the innumerable social reforms of the last century. It is to a like outpouring of the Spirit of God upon His Church, and to the same divine energy manifesting itself in holy lives and practical work, far

more than to learned confutations, however valuable these may be in their place, that we must look for the overthrow of the forms of unbelief that lift up their heads among us to-day. The owls vanish when the daylight reappears.

III.

THE ASSAULTS UPON THE BIBLE

which cause most anxiety at the present hour, it will be generally agreed, are those which come from the newer schools of Old and New Testament criticism, from a popular monistic philosophy, from evolutionary theories in science, and from the absorbing interest which has recently been displayed in the study of comparative religion and mythology. The two subjects which are most to the front are criticism and science, though signs are not wanting that the foremost *rôle* may soon be taken by the comparative study of religions.

Of course, it is recognised that mistakes may be made, and old controversies on all these subjects carry in them lessons to be wisely laid to heart by both the assailants and the defenders of the Bible. Voltaire was confident that Christianity would be overthrown by the discovery of the law of gravitation, and would not survive a century. Yet Sir Isaac Newton, who discovered the law, was a humble Christian man. Strauss boldly affirmed that the Copernican system gave the death-blow to the Christian view of the world.* But what Christian to-day feels his faith in the slightest degree affected by the discovery that the earth goes round the sun, and not the sun, as was once believed, round the earth.

There were many vauntings that the Bible was discredited, and many shakings of heart on the part of believers in the Bible themselves, when geology made it

* See his *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, pp. 10 and 110.

certain that the world was immensely older than the 6,000 years assigned to it since the creation by the current chronology. The saintly Cowper could poke his gentle satire at the geologists :—

> "Some drill and bore
> The solid earth, and from the strata there
> Extract a register, by which we learn
> That He who made it, and reveal'd its date
> To Moses, was mistaken in its age."*

But few are troubled at the present time, or feel that even the "days" of Genesis are put in serious peril, by the discovery, through the same drilling and boring, of the magnificent procession of the æons through which the work of creation actually extended.

On the other hand, as we shall see by and by, science also has had to lay aside many extreme hypotheses, and abandon or modify theories, which created, or seemed to create, difficulties in comparison with Scripture.

One is taught by these things to avoid dogmatism, and wait patiently for the progress of discovery, when many things which present difficulty at a cruder stage of science will clear themselves up of their own accord. Yet

THERE ARE LIMITS,

as everyone also must admit, set by the nature of the case to this process of conciliation. Because good Christian men once mistakenly contended for the inspiration of the Hebrew vowel-points, it does not follow, as seems sometimes to be argued, that the most radical results of a destructive criticism are compatible with faith in the Bible's inspiration and authority. Because people once believed that the sun went round the earth, and shook their heads in alarm at geological discoveries of the age of the earth, it does not follow that spiritual religion—

* *The Task*, Bk. III.

not to say Christian faith—can ever reconcile itself to a form of theory that declares mind to be a mere function of brain, denies free will, and pours scorn on belief in immortality. Because there are different views on evolution and creation, it does not follow that any and every account of the mode of man's physical and spiritual origin leaves intact the Bible doctrine of sin. There is need, I grant, for caution, and for wise and charitable discrimination between essentials and non-essentials in belief, as in practice. But there are none the less great and vital issues between truth and error about the Bible which no sophistry can obscure, and no juggling with words efface.

IV.

The church is deeply concerned at the moment with the bearings and issues of what is called

THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

It is well to understand what the feeling really is which lies at the bottom of this anxiety. It is not at all, in the first place, a feeling as to the general legitimacy of criticism. I do not believe—and the reception given to my own volume on the Old Testament confirms me in this opinion—that any really devout student of the Bible desires to tie up honest inquiry on any question of author, origin, date, or mode of composition of the Biblical books, which does not involve clear contradiction of the Bible's own testimony on these subjects. By all means, if any traditional opinion can be shown by valid reasoning on sound data to be in error on such points, let it be corrected.

The feeling as to the type of Higher Criticism now in vogue goes much deeper. What is felt is that this newer school of criticism—commonly known as the

"Wellhausen" school from its most distinguished representative—really subverts the basis of a reasonable faith in the Bible, and of a revelation of God contained in it, altogether. There are moderate and devout men in this country—men whom personally one must honour—who seek to tone down the negations of the theory, and breathe into it a more believing spirit; but for the exhibition of its principles one prefers to go to the originators and accredited representatives of the school; and, even in the works of the moderate critics, one soon discovers that the best efforts cannot remove the taint of rationalism which inheres in its very essence.

It is not extravagant to say that, on the

MOST FAVOURABLE SHOWING

in this theory, little is left of the patriarchal and Mosaic history; that the Bible's own account of the origin, nature, and course of development of Israel's religion disappears, and an entirely different account, resting on different premises, is substituted for it; that till the times of the prophets, at least, the supernatural recedes very much behind the natural, and miracle is hardly recognised; that practically all the legislation is taken from Moses and ascribed to a much later date; while the Levitical system in its main features is held to be a post-exilian invention, imposing on the returned Jewish remnant a code of ritual which the prophets of an earlier age, had they known of it, would have vehemently denounced as dishonouring to Jehovah!

Those who are acquainted with the literature of the school will admit, I think, that this is an exceedingly mild account of its general teaching;* but if it is accepted, it surely sufficiently explains the repugnance with which the immense mass of Christian people in

* Illustrations will be given later.

our churches regard this strange method of dealing with God's Holy Word. If in their denunciation of it they sometimes say and feel that it is really asking them to accept

ANOTHER BIBLE,

they are not without justification for that opinion in certain utterances of the school itself. Here is a recent pronouncement by a distinguished representative of the more moderate wing of the school, Prof. A. Westphal, of Montauban. "It is not in vain," he says, "that the internal ferment provoked by the old struggles has troubled the Church for long years. If it has not succeeded in furnishing the theological renovation which was expected from it, the work of dislocation of traditional ideas is none the less accomplished. Little by little the abyss has been dug between the catechism of the Church (*du temple*) and the theology of the school; the day is coming when we shall be faced with two Bibles, the Bible of the faithful, and the Bible of the scholar."*

It would be easy to multiply quotations to the same effect, but this is sufficient at present to show the gravity of the issue by which the Church is to-day confronted.

It adds to the gravity of the case that, according to the school itself, the "critical views" represented by it (so writes one) are "at present all but universally held by Old Testament scholars." This, like many other statements of the school, requires, as we shall afterwards find, to be taken *cum grano;* but there is no doubt that for many years the Wellhausen school has been the dominant one, and has, in more or less pronounced forms, attracted an ever-increasing following to its banner; and that in Britain and America it is dis-

*"Le jour vient où deux Bibles seront en presence: la Bible du fidèle et la Bible du savant."—*Jehovah, les Etapes de la Révélation.* Pref. p. 3.

tinctly the ruling school still. Writers have almost ceased to argue about it; they are content to repeat its shibboleths, and register what they are pleased to call its "settled results." It might appear as if the representative of "the traditional view" had nothing left for him to do but to pull down his flag and gratefully accept what crumbs of history, law, and prophetic teaching—the last in larger measure—the critic is able to rescue for him from the general wreckage.

V.

Before, however, giving way to undue alarm, the believer in the Bible, as we have been accustomed to understand it, will do well to place before his mind

CERTAIN REASSURING CONSIDERATIONS

which may help somewhat to modify a desponding judgment on the situation. I mention here only two or three of these, reserving further survey of this and other forms of trial of the Bible to succeeding papers.

(1) One preliminary consideration of some importance is that, after all, very much in the contentions of the Wellhausen school is not new, and what is new has not yet, as theories go, had a very long time to

THOROUGHLY TEST AND ESTABLISH

itself. Dr. Cheyne, in his book on *The Founders of Criticism*, draws attention with justice to the great indebtedness of the earlier critical schools to English Deism (pp. 1, 2). One is continually struck in reading the attacks on, and defences of, the Old Testament in the old Deistical controversy, with the surprising anticipations of the difficulties, errors, contradictions, imperfections, immoralities served up to-day as the newest learning in Old Testament criticism. Not a little on these subjects

in modern books is already to be found, as vigorously stated, in Morgan, and Bolingbroke, and Paine, and in the older rationalists like Vatke and Von Bohlen. Yet faith in the Bible withstood the shock then—gave, moreover, exceedingly good reasons for doing so—and is not likely to be overturned by the reproduction of the same things now.

On the other hand, what is new in the Wellhausen theory, particularly the post-exilian dating of the Levitical Law, has not yet had a very long period of trial. The critical theory, of which it is the outcome, has been maturing for more than a century; but this part of it, though advanced tentatively by earlier investigators, met with little or no favour till twenty-five or thirty years ago, when, in the wake of Graf's book in 1866, it "caught on" through the able advocacy of Kuenen and Wellhausen. Previously to that it had been generally rejected as an incredible folly. Kuenen himself, in 1861, spoke of its grounds as "not worthy of refutation." While, therefore, the Wellhausen theory has more recently had a remarkable success, it is still, as such things go,

A COMPARATIVE NOVELTY,

and it is quite too early yet to speak of it as "a settled result." The history of the Tübingen school in New Testament criticism holds out, as we shall by and by see, a warning here. There were causes in the state of thought of our time which favoured the rise of such a school; it was imported as a novelty, and "rushed" in this country by certain very able scholars; adventitious circumstances gave it an artificial *éclat*, and predisposed younger scholars in a chivalrous spirit to adopt it; as its influence spread it became a kind of tradition, a fashion of thought, and was often assented to because scholars "said it," without much independent examination of its

grounds. Its somewhat gourd-like popularity is itself a good reason for being chary in yielding to it an unqualified assent.

(2) There is, however, a second consideration which strongly fortifies this moral of the first. The school in question has had an astonishing success, but it is by no means the case that it has had all the field to itself, or that it has it now, or has it in any increasing degree. It is a fact that in every age

EXCESSES OF CRITICISM

tend to work out their own cure. It was so in the Tübingen school; and so it is proving itself to be here. Scholars may talk as they will of "settled results," but it is undeniable that extraordinary changes are taking place within the critical school, which augur ill for its future ascendency. The Wellhausen theory applies the principle of evolution to the religion of Israel, but its own development is a remarkable illustration of the same principle. I shall have occasion later to speak of some of these developments; enough at present to say that they run the theory into such excesses in multiplication of sources, minute dissection of documents, extension of time in the process, complicated operations in combination and redaction, that the theory literally breaks down under its own weight, and becomes incredible to soberly thinking minds. I have compared it in my book to the constant adding on of cycles and epicycles in the Ptolemaic astronomer's chart, till it became a huge maze of confusion which defied belief. The theory, in my humble opinion, is rapidly running to seed; by its very excesses is digging its own grave.

(3) This leads me to say, next, that, in point of fact,

GREAT CHANGES

are already apparent in influential quarters in the state of

opinion on Old Testament questions; and greater changes are surely imminent in the near future. I do not refer to the still powerful body of opinion on the Continent that refuses adhesion to the Wellhausen programme—a great deal more powerful than many imagine—or to the changes in individual opinion that occasionally occur, though these also are noteworthy as signs of the times. One may notice, however, as of special significance the decisive break of leading archæologists, as Sayce, Hommel, Halèvy, Ditlef-Nielson, with the Wellhausen theory, which most of them had earlier accepted.

My own conviction is that there is at the present moment a considerable and growing amount of distrust of the methods and conclusions of the reigning critical school in the minds of both clergy and laity in our own country. It is but a straw showing which way the wind blows, but one cannot but be interested in the statement made by Dr. Robertson Nicoll in his notice of the late Dr. George Matheson, that, after a period of sanguine acceptance of the processes and results of the Higher Criticism, as expounded by Prof. W. R. Śmith, and of the doctrine of evolution, "he came," in later life, "to disbelieve in the Higher Criticism and in the doctrine of evolution—at least in its extreme form."*

It is, however, something far more wide-reaching I have in view in the remark just made as to impending revolutionary changes in critical opinion. The truth is, the placards are again changing, and a new school has already arisen—the so-called

"HISTORICAL-CRITICAL" SCHOOL,

which is gathering to it the younger generation of scholars, and which in its heart regards Wellhausenism as pretty much obsolete. It is not on that account more believing,

* *British Weekly*, Sept. 6, 1906.

but is in some respects more destructive: yet its critical positions show a marked return in a conservative direction. I might illustrate from H. Gunkel, the influential Professor at Berlin, but prefer to take a single example from an address delivered recently at a conference at Eisenach, by the learned Orientalist, Hugo Winckler,* a leading representative of this tendency. This remarkable address is nothing less than a vigorous assault on the whole foundation of the Wellhausen theory of the religion of Israel, in its advance from a tribal god to ethical monotheism in the age of the prophets, and in its alleged successive stages of nomad religion, agricultural religion, prophetic religion, and legal religion. Winckler assails the theory root and branch, and boldly declares that there has been no "development" of the kind. He decisively rejects the cardinal Wellhausen tenet of the origin of the Levitical Law in the exile, and contends that "law and prophets" must have been present from the beginning. He mentions that he also is here recanting an earlier view. Here is a revolution, indeed—one prophetic of much more. In how curious a light, after such a pronouncement, appears the talk about "settled results!"

(4) One other circumstance I would mention as tending to a recoil in many minds from the prevalent methods in Old Testament Criticism, and I refer to it only in a word. It is the spectacle afforded in recent works of what these methods really mean when applied with like unflinching boldness to the documents and history of

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

It is a remarkable feature in the existing critical situation

*Since published under the clumsy title of *Religionsgeschichtlicher und geschichtlicher Orient*, and described as a testing of the presuppositions of the Wellhausen School on the basis of Marti's book on *The Religion of the Old Testament*.

that the critics, having apparently sucked their orange well-nigh dry in the Old Testament, are now precipitating themselves in increasing numbers on the New Testament, with the result that its texts, narratives, and portraiture of the life of Jesus and of the early Church, are being subjected to the same treatment as had laid in ruins the patriarchal and Mosaic history.

Here, however, the matter touches the Christian conscience too closely. Abraham and Moses may go in fidelity to the historical method, but if Christ is to be taken away, there is a start of shocked surprise. A halt must be called, and the methods that lead to such a result must be carefully looked into! Here the new historical-critical method is in its element, with its comparative mythology, and reduction of the narratives of the Nativity and Resurrection into legends.

One is interested in this connection to see the strenuous protest being made by so convinced an Old Testament critic as Prof. C. A. Briggs, in defence of the Virgin Birth. Again, perhaps, only a straw, but a significant one. This rejuvenation of assault upon the New Testament will also occupy us later.

SCOPE OF THE PAPERS.

The purpose and scope of the papers collected in this volume will now, I hope, be sufficiently apparent. Written from the standpoint of assured faith in the revelation of God in the Scriptures, they are intended to remove disquietude, confirm faith, and set forth considerations which may serve to show that, severe as the trial is to which the Bible is at present subjected, it will emerge from the ordeal, as heretofore, unscathed, and may be depended on to retain its place in the devout regard of Christian people, as the repository of the living oracles of God for the guidance and salvation of mankind.

II

An Instructive Object-Lesson

An Instructive Object-Lesson

THE past is a great instructor as to the power that resides in the Bible to survive the assaults made upon it even by the most skilful adversaries. I referred in the previous paper to the keen literary attacks made on Christianity by its pagan opponents in the second century. A special object of assault was the Gospels. One of the most keen-witted of these assailants was the clever Epicurean,

CELSUS,

of whom the German Baur does not hesitate to say: "In acuteness, in dialectical aptitude, in many-sided culture, at once philosophical and general, Celsus stands behind no opponent of Christianity."* His book called *The True Word*—abundant extracts from which are preserved to us by Origen—is, in its way, a masterpiece of attack upon the Evangelic records. It is the book of a man of undeniable acuteness, of wide reading, of philosophic culture, of exceptional literary ability, who, after a minute study of the Christian writings, of deliberate purpose sets himself to assail, undermine, and overthrow Christianity by all the resources of knowledge, argument and raillery at his command. Scarcely anything escapes his eye of which a point could be made against the new faith. Yet the book

**Church History of First Three Centuries*, II., p. 141.

failed! So far as we can see, it had absolutely not the slightest effect in stopping the triumphant progress of Christianity in the Empire. It is doubtful if we should ever have heard of its existence but for the fact that Origen in the following century composed a reply to it.

And the reason is not far to seek. Mockery and ridicule were no effective weapons against the holy power which men felt had entered the world in the religion of Jesus Christ. Christian men and women needed no argument to refute Celsus. They knew from their own experience that he did not do justice to their books, their religion, their morality, their lives. He might see nothing of the transcendent moral and spiritual glory of the Christian Gospel, but others were not so blind. His spirit would not attract them where Christ's failed. He might cavil and misrepresent, but he had no substitute to offer for the salvation which men knew Christ had brought them.

The case of Celsus is typical, and preludes the whole history of the conflict of faith with unbelief.

VOLTAIRE

was the keenest and most unsparing assailant of the Bible in the eighteenth century. He is credited with the saying that it took twelve men to found Christianity, but he would show the world that one man was sufficient to overthrow it. Proud but vain boast! The Bible which Voltaire laboured to destroy holds on its career of conquest unchecked. The records of Bible societies show that last year (1905) was actually the largest in the circulation of the sacred volume ever attained. But Voltaire's own books—some score or two of them—stand piled, dust-laden, on the shelves; and save for some literary or historical purpose, who ever thinks of consulting them? Why, again, this difference? Simply because the Bible

has a message for the world, which the world feels it needs; Voltaire's books had not.

I.

These are instances from centuries gone by. I propose now in this paper to sketch the history of a school of criticism in the immediate past, which has, I think, valuable instruction for us in the present time of trial for the Bible, and is, besides, in important ways, linked with living controversies. I refer to the famous historical and critical school commonly known as

THE TÜBINGEN SCHOOL,

from its connection with Ferdinand Chr. Baur, Professor in that University. It was a New Testament, not an Old Testament, school, but its lessons are as applicable to the one school of criticism as to the other. It had a great prestige about the middle of last century, attracted to itself a band of able scholars—men like Schwegler, Zeller, Hilgenfeld, A. Ritschl—and ruled the critical world for over a generation. Dr. Samuel Davidson became a convert to it, and advocated its theories in this country. It proclaimed itself, in the usual style, to be the "critical," as opposed to the "uncritical" view*, and looked with scorn on those who rejected its conclusions. Its temporary vogue markedly resembled that of the Wellhausen school to-day. Yet little by little its influence ebbed, till now the tide is completely turned, and hardly any among critical writers is found so poor as to do it reverence. A glance at the fortunes of such a school can scarcely fail to be educative.

*Baur says in a note in his *Church History*: "Here, if anywhere, is a conflict of principles, which cannot be carried further. The two views simply confront each other as the critical view and the uncritical." (I., p. 53.

Baur, the founder of this school, was a man of great learning, ability, and conscientiousness, and had a power which few have surpassed of giving a novel theory a look of plausibility, and even of demonstration. His theory, like Wellhausen's, fascinated by the skill with which it grouped its materials in support of a central thesis, and by the easy key it seemed to afford to many difficult phenomena in the Apostolic and post-Apostolic ages of the Church.

Briefly stated, the theory turns on

ONE GREAT ANTITHESIS,

which is the pillar of the whole—the alleged existence of Petrine and Pauline parties, in conflict with each other, in the early Church. We look in vain, Baur thinks, for a correct picture of early Christianity in the Book of Acts, which is a composition of the second century, written expressly for the purpose of glozing over the differences between the original Apostles and Paul. The true state of matters is mirrored in the contemporary, and undoubtedly authentic, Epistles of Paul—of which he acknowledges four, the Epistles to the Galatians, I. and II. Corinthians, and Romans—just as, in the Old Testament school, we are taken for our starting-point from the historical books to the prophets, or such portions of them as the critics are pleased to allow to be genuine. Here, and in the Apocalypse, accepted as a work of the Apostle John, we see the Church rent by a schism which threatened its very existence. The primitive believers at Jerusalem were far from having the enlightened views ascribed to them in the Book of Acts. They were rather Jews of the most exclusive type, who differed from the rest of their countrymen only in believing that the Messiah had already appeared in Jesus of Nazareth, and who thought of nothing less than of breaking with

Judaism or relaxing the obligations of the Mosaic law.

When, now, Gentile Churches were founded, it was inevitable that a conflict should arise. Stephen, the Hellenist, was the precursor of the new doctrine: but it was

PAUL'S LABOURS,

and his success in founding churches among the Gentiles, which brought matters to a crisis. Jews came from Judæa to Antioch, insisting on the circumcision of the new converts as a condition of salvation (Acts xv. 1). This Paul and the Gentile Christians strenuously resisted. To try to come to some understanding on the subject, Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to meet with the original Apostles. The Book of Acts, in the account it gives of the great Council at Jerusalem (Acts xv.), represents the older Apostles as on the side of Paul in principle —a representation, according to Baur, completely contradicted by the narrative in Gal. ii., which, besides, knows nothing of a public meeting, and speaks only of a private interview with the three of chief repute, Peter, John, and James, the Lord's brother. It is quite a mistake, Baur holds, to suppose that the so-called "Judaizers" were only a troublesome party or faction in the Church, and that the original Apostles had no sympathy with their movement. The real heads of

THE OPPOSITION TO PAUL,

according to his reading of the facts, were the original Apostles themselves. In his own words: "Who were the opponents to whom Paul and Barnabas had to offer so strenuous a resistance? Who else than the elder Apostles themselves."*

**Church History*, I., p. 52.

The result of the conference with the Three, on Baur's theory, was a patched up agreement, according to which each went his own way, without any real harmony in principle. This became evident shortly after, when Peter came to Antioch, and a collision occurred between him and Paul. Peter, influenced by his surroundings, had so far modified his Jewish strictness, and had begun to eat with the Gentiles. This continued till a deputation came from James at Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 12), when he at once returned to his former practice, and drew down upon him the sharp rebuke of Paul. According to Baur, Peter and Paul never after this were reconciled, and the Jewish legalists, on their side, never forgot the slight put on their great Apostle.

From this conflict at Antioch dates

THE FINAL BREAK

of Paul with the Jewish party. Thenceforth they set themselves, still with the concurrence of the older Apostles, to oppose and frustrate Paul wherever he went. In Galatia they succeeded in subverting his work, and in bringing back his converts to circumcision and the law. In Corinth they introduced divisions, and set up a Petrine as against a Pauline party, which boldly challenged Paul's right to regard himself as an Apostle at all. These opponents, as Paul admits, brought with them "letters of commendation" (2 Cor. iii. 1). The Apocalypse is interpreted as breathing throughout an unmistakable spirit of hostility to Paul, who is declared to be expressly excluded in the mention of "the twelve Apostles of the Lamb," whose names are in the foundations of the holy city (Rev. xxi. 14). The Book of Acts, written towards the middle of the next century, seeks to conceal this chasm; but even in it, it is said, the traces of this fierce controversy cannot be altogether effaced.

According to its own showing, the first Apostles made no attempt to carry out any mission to the Gentiles; Paul met with keen opposition in his work at Antioch and elsewhere; and when at length he returned for the last time to Jerusalem, he was met by the statement of James: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them which have believed; and they are all zealous for the law" (Acts xxi. 20). Here, it is contended, we have pictured the true state of the case: a church at Jerusalem composed of zealots for the law; Paul, on the other hand, preaching freedom from the law; and between the two parties, a bitter and irreconcilable opposition!

The tension thus created, however, could not remain permanent, and we have next, according to Baur,

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

tending to lessen the sharpness of the opposition, and to draw the parties closer together. Approximations began to be made on either side, the stages of which reflect themselves in the literary products of the time. Gospels and Epistles were composed from a party point of view, each seeking to commend its own standpoint, and to conciliate opponents. The Gospel of Matthew, *e.g.*, represents a modified Jewish standpoint: the Gospel of Luke and the Acts are Pauline, but written in the interests of conciliation; Mark is a neutral Gospel, based on Matthew and Luke (the newer criticism precisely reverses this relation); Epistles like Ephesians and Colossians represent the same conciliatory tendency; while, finally, the Gospel of John brings up the rear, with its Christian Gnosticism, pointing to a date somewhere between A.D. 160 and 170. I need not follow the further steps by which, in Baur's view, after mutual concession, Jewish and Gentile Christianity got blended together towards

the end of the second century in the unity of the Catholic Church.

Such in its main features was Baur's theory of the Apostolic age, stated and defended with marvellous acuteness, and wrought out with undeniable plausibility and skill. For a time, as I have said, it

QUITE CAPTIVATED

the advanced spirits in theology, just as the Wellhausen theory is doing now. The method seemed the right one —to start, not with documents of a later, or at least uncertain age, but with undoubtedly contemporary, first-hand writings; the proofs seemed clear—the contradictions between Acts and the Epistle to the Galatians; the antagonism of Paul to the Three, as shown in the same Epistle; the emissaries who came from James to Antioch, and compelled Peter to renounce his more liberal practice; the conflicts with the Judaizers in Galatia and other churches; the Petrine party in Corinth, and the "letters of recommendation" they brought with them, evidently from some influential quarters; the fact that the early Apostles themselves never attempted a Gentile mission; the thousands of Jews who believed, who were all zealous for the law, in Jerusalem—how could it be doubted that the true key had been found to the many perplexing phenomena in the Apostolic age which the old theory ignored, and that the eyes of the world had at length been opened to the actual course of events in that greatly misunderstood period? The Wellhausen theory of "the three Codes," as the key to the religious history of Israel, could not be clearer!

II.

What now, it is instructive to inquire, has been

THE VERDICT OF HISTORY

on this ingenious and imposing theory, promulgated by

Baur with so much *éclat*? I have already hinted that it has not been favourable, but it is well to watch the process. The theory, as above sketched, was not long able to hold the field in its integrity. After a little time had been given for consideration, it became evident to unprejudiced minds that it had at least been pushed much too far, and that, in the form in which Baur had presented it, it was little more than a caricature of early Christianity. Some of Baur's ablest disciples, accordingly, ere long felt themselves compelled to part company with their master on essential points, and gradually the party was under the necessity of greatly retracting its position as a whole. Two causes, mainly, led to this result:—

(1) It was soon seen, and had to be acknowledged, that, granting him his own data, Baur had greatly overdriven the evidence, and that

ON PURELY HISTORICAL GROUNDS

his contentions could not be maintained. It was early pointed out, *e.g.*, by Lechler, that the text in Gal. ii. 1, 2, so far from confining Paul's visit to a private conference, expressly implies the larger meeting with the Church. "I went up again," Paul says, "to Jerusalem . . . and laid before them the Gospel which I preach . . . but privately before them of repute," &c. Here "them," in the connection, can only be the believers in Jerusalem, the Church itself, and the "but" marks the transition to a private interview. Lechler in this had the rare good fortune of convincing his opponents, for the point he raised has been conceded by Zeller, Holsten, Ritschl, Pfleiderer, Reuss, and most others.

It is not otherwise with the alleged opposition between Paul and the Three in Gal. ii. It has long been shown that this chapter, so far from proving antagonism in

principle, proves agreement. Paul speaks of "false brethren privily brought in" (ver. 4), but the very mention of "privily" shows that they were not a majority in the Church; and the express statement of the chapter is that when the Three heard Paul's account of his work, they gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship (ver. 9). Here again there has come about a consensus of leading critics, as Holsten, Ritschl, Reuss, Pfleiderer, &c.

It is evident again, in Gal. ii. 11, 12, that in withdrawing from eating with the Gentiles, Peter was acting in weakness, against his own better convictions; and the after hostility of Peter to Paul is a simple myth, now also generally abandoned. Among other indications in the history, an undeniable evidence of the good feeling which subsisted between the Church at Jerusalem and the Pauline Church is the collection for the poor saints in Judæa, with which Paul so honourably busied himself.*

But (2) there was yet another cause which inevitably led to the abandoment of the extreme positions of Baur, viz.,

itself. Baur's school was nothing if not critical.† It

* Difficulty has been raised as to the silence of the later history and the epistles on the "decree" of the Jerusalem Council (Acts xv. 23 ff). A. Ritschl (in the work named below) has probably given the true explanation in showing that, in the conditions, the "decree" necessarily fell early into desuetude. The decision of the Council was of the nature of a compromise. It settled that circumcision was not to be enforced in the Gentiles; it was not settled whether *Jews* were at liberty to dispense with the customs of their nation. The difference on this point was one bound to emerge in mixed Churches—especially in *eating* (Gal. ii. 11-14). The question of principle, once raised, could only be settled in the interests of a liberty which made the "decree" obsolete.

† In the opening of his book on *Paul*, Baur says: "It may be justly said of the present age that its prevailing tendency is critical. . . Thought has now, after the laborious toil of many centuries, emancipated itself, and thrown away its crutches." This was in 1845.

was with critical weapons its battles were fought, and on critical grounds it claimed acceptance. But it was just here, by the continuous application of the same methods, that the leading postulates of the school were overthrown. It was an easy way to gain a victory to make a clean sweep of nearly all the books of the New Testament, thrusting them down to the second century—Old Testament criticism substitutes the Exile—and accounting for them by deliberate use of fiction. Yet if this was not done, the theory would not stand for an hour. The late date of the New Testament writings is not an accident, but an essential part of Baur's theory—so, too, in Old Testament theories—yet the progress of the same careful, thorough criticism which, be it conceded, his own school did so much to foster, has rendered it impossible to maintain this late date for the documents on which he founds. With this, as an invaluable auxiliary—the Old Testament parallel here is archæology—has gone

THE PROGRESS OF DISCOVERY,

compelling in many instances the driving back of the date of the New Testament books to a much earlier period than Baur would allow. Baur, in other words, needed for his purpose to make a clean sweep of the great bulk of the literature of the New Testament; criticism and discovery combined to show that this could not be done. One by one Paul's Epistles have had to be given back to him, till it is chiefly on the Pastoral Epistles, in whole or part, that, in advanced circles, doubt is permitted to rest; the first three Gospels have been carried back by stringent processes of criticism to dates well within the Apostolic age; even the Gospel of John is put by the opponents of its genuineness—a diminishing number—fully half a century earlier than Baur would acknowledge. More will be said of this revolution in opinion

immediately; I take here only an instance or two in illustration of the effect of discovery.

Baur would fain put the

GOSPEL OF JOHN

down to about A.D. 170. But in 1842 discovery was made of a long-lost book of Hippolytus (about A.D. 200), *A Refutation of All Heresies*, which dealt specifically with the Gnostic systems of Basilides and Valentinus, and made it perfectly clear that these systems were founded on the teaching of the Fourth Gospel. As Basilides flourished as early as A.D. 125, the inference was obvious. Here is one passage: "And this he [Basilides] says is that which has been stated in the Gospels, 'He was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'" No candid mind will deny that this quotation is from John i. 9. Another example. In a curious heretical production of the middle or latter part of the second century, *The Clementine Homilies*, there were numerous clear references to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and some which any ordinary mind would have thought clear enough to John also. It did not, however, suit the critics to admit this, and the alleged absence of any references to John was turned into an argument against the existence of the Gospel before A.D. 160. Up to this time the MS. was imperfect, the last homily, and half of the one preceding, being wanting. In 1853 a complete MS. of the *Homilies* was discovered, and there, in the part formerly missing, was a reference so clear to the story of the man born blind in John ix, that doubt was no longer possible, and the critics yielded up the point. The more recent discovery of translations of Tatian's famous *Diatessaron*, or Harmony of the Four Gospels, made soon after the middle of the second century, at once establishes the existence of that Harmony—which had

been keenly disputed*—and the place of John's Gospel in it. It begins with the sentence, "In the beginning was the Word' (John i. 1).

III.

It will hardly, now, be wondered at, that, pressed by these difficulties, the school beat a retreat. A. Ritschl, at first an expounder of its critical views (he wrote to prove that Marcion's mutilated Gospel of Luke was probably the original—a position afterwards surrendered), gradually broke with its positions, and finally, in 1857, in the second edition of his book on *The Origin of the Old Catholic Church*, wrote one of the ablest refutations of it.

The full extent, however, of the

BREACH OF CRITICAL SCHOLARS

with this once-honoured school, is only seen when we come down to recent times.

On the actual situation I shall cite a few sentences from one who will not be regarded as unduly biassed towards conservatism—Prof. A. S. Peake, of the University of Manchester. In a recent inaugural lecture on "The Present Movement of Biblical Science," Mr. Peake signalises as one of the two features in recent New Testament Introduction, "the general break with the Tübingen tradition."† He remarks: "All that profound learning and brilliant genius could do for the theory was done by Baur and the band of scholars he

* As by the author of the book called *Supernatural Religion* (W. R. Cassels).

† In the volume entitled *Inaugural Lectures delivered by Members of the Faculty of Theology during its First Session*, 1904-5. Cf., pp. 49-53. The other "feature" Mr. Peake discerns is "the break in England with the Lightfoot tradition," with respect, apparently, to the order of the Pauline Epistles, especially Galatians.

gathered round him." But, "as is well known, this criticism has not held its ground. In the first place, it rested too much on a theory of what the history must have been not to have presented a distorted statement of what it actually is. In the next place the radical criticism of Baur has been almost entirely abandoned by those who would now be regarded as radical critics." The theory is taken piecemeal, and almost all its contentions are shown to be now surrendered. *E.g.*, "With the exception of Hilgenfeld, practically all critics are agreed that Mark is the earliest of the synoptists; in other words, what Baur declared to be the latest, because the most neutral, of the Gospels is now placed first of all." "The theory entertained by this school as to the Acts of the Apostles has also been abandoned: the conciliatory tendency which was detected in it is seen to have been greatly exaggerated." It is added: "Apart from this abandonment of Baur's New Testament criticism, there are other objections to the theory which have contributed to its surrender."

In short, no shred is left that one can discern of the Tübingen theory at all. The few scholars that adhere to it, as Van Manen, have developed its criticism "into an extremely negative form," leaving "not a single New Testament writing to its traditional author."* Their exploits—"the delirium of hyper-criticism"—awaken only "amazement." I agree, but wonder in turn, that Mr. Peake, in view of all this, should write as confidently

* The tendency of advanced critics either to revert to a more conservative position or go off into extreme negation, receives continual illustration from the history of thought. As a recent instance, one reads that Dr. Lipsius, of Jena, has resigned his chair of theology, and accepted one in philosophy, on the ground that he has given up his belief in Christianity, and desires a position in which he will be free, if he chooses, to antagonise it.

as he does of "assured results" in the field of Old Testament criticism (p. 32).

IV.

LATER DISCUSSIONS.

The Tübingen tradition is broken, but we have not yet reached the end of our developments. To abandon Baur's view of Luke's Gospel, and of the Book of Acts, was not yet to admit Luke's authorship of these two works, or to concede to them a high historical value. It was a great step in advance when Prof. W. M. Ramsay, of Aberdeen, himself formerly an adherent of the Tübingen school, came out some years ago as a thorough-going defender of Luke's title to the rank of a first-class historian. The Continent, however, seemed comparatively unmoved. Now there is a change, and within the last few months criticism has received

A NEW SURPRISE,

and something not unlike a shock to its nerves, by the entrance into this field of controversy of no less redoubtable a champion of the traditional view of Luke's authorship of the Gospel and the Acts than the brilliant and learned Prof. A. Harnack, of Berlin.*

To realise the significance of this fact one has first to remember that the non-Lucan authorship of these two works was a point which "criticism" had entirely settled to its own satisfaction long ago—it was a "settled result" (as much so as the Old Testament J, E, and P); and, next, to hear what Harnack has to say, not only on this particular question, but on the value of "tradition," and on modern methods of criticism in general.

* In his book, *Lukas der Arzt, der Verfasser des dritten Evangeliums und der Apostelgeschichte* (Luke the Physician, the Author of the Third Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles),

On the first point it is worth while listening to a colleague of Harnack's, Prof. Schürer, *apropos* of this same book, if only to note the reason he gives for rejecting the unity of the Acts, viz., its unhistoricity. "The linguistic unity of the work," he says, "has been already hitherto recognised, and still all representatives of a critical view of things were at one in holding that the author of the 'We' source, and the author of the Acts, are to be distinguished, because the latter, on account of the glaring marks of unhistoricity in his work, cannot be a companion of Paul,"* "All representatives"—"at one"—"cannot be," how familiar are the phrases! But Harnack is not dismayed, and does not bate his breath in speaking of the critics. He reckons up the forces against him, and thus pictures the temper of the reigning school: "In spite of the contradiction of Credner, B. Weiss, Klostermann, Zahn, &c., the untenableness of the tradition [of Luke's authorship] is held to be so completely established, that one hardly takes the trouble any longer to prove it, or even to give any attention to the arguments of opponents. Indeed, there seems no longer a willingness to recognise that such arguments exist. Jülicher believes he is compelled to see in the ascription of the book to Luke only 'an adventurous wish.' So quickly does criticism forget, aud in so partisan a spirit does it stiffen itself in its hypotheses!" (p. 5). "Can not," he says again, "Why not? Whence have we so sure a knowledge of Apostolic and post-Apostolic times, that we dare oppose our 'knowing' to surely attested facts?" (p. 87). He does not believe there ever was a separate "We" source at all.

Harnack claims, accordingly, in his Preface: "I hope to have shown in the following pages that criticism has gone wrong, and that

* *Literaturzeitung*, July 18, 1906.

TRADITION IS RIGHT,"

and he reminds his readers that ten years ago he told them that "in the criticism of the sources of the oldest Chistianity we are in a movement backward to tradition." "Something," he says, "has certainly been won back in the fact that we are able to circumscribe more precisely the ground and the time of the oldest, foundation-laying formation of tradition; by which not a few wild hypotheses are excluded. In the years 30-70—*and, indeed, in Palestine, more exactly in Jerusalem—everything really came into being and happened*, of which what followed was simply the unfolding."* (Italics his.) The third chapter of his book is headed: "On the Pretended Impossibility of Vindicating the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles for Luke." Harnack was never a believer in the Tübingen theory,† and now he sees in it the fundamental error in New Testament criticism. "All mistakes which have been made in New Testament criticism gather themselves to a focus in the criticism of the Acts of the Apostles," and the root-error is Baur's theory of the relations of Jewish and Gentile Christianity (p. 87). One is reminded how certain scholars are now beginning to liken Wellhausen's dogma of "the centralisation of worship" to this exploded dogma of the Baur school!

All this is very instructive. The cry of "settled results"! The proof of how far criticism, when most sure of itself, can go astray! The certainty that a change will come, and flouted "tradition" will reassert its rights! How the credit of books most assailed is by and by rehabili-

* The German is—"In den Jahren 30-70—*und, zwar in Palästinà, näher in Jerusalem—ist eigentlich Alles geworden und geschehen.* was sich nachher entfaltet hat."

† Cf. his *History of Dogma*, I., p. 49

tated! We seem to hear the echoes of Old Testament discussion at every step, and are grateful for the encouragement the retrospect yields.

LUKE AS HISTORIAN.

Yet Harnack, while assailing the critical views on Luke, is very cautious about committing himself to the entire historicity of the Book of Acts. He retains his liberty to pick what holes he pleases in the narrative on its historical side. His own demonstration of the Lucan authorship, and of the soundness of the sources Luke employed, will make it increasingly difficult for him to do this. Here, however, Prof. Ramsay comes to the rescue, and on the question of fact is much the better judge. It was not the application of literary criticism which convinced Prof. Ramsay that he had here a

FIRST-CLASS HISTORICAL SOURCE.

His calling took him to Asia Minor on exploration wor and in the course of his researches he was so much impressed with the minute accuracy of the Book of Acts that it led him bit by bit to recast his whole opinion, and he has now become one of the ablest defenders of Luke's accuracy as a historian. In addition to his works on Paul, he has written a very able defence of the narrative of the Nativity in the Gospel of Luke.*

V.

It would unduly extend this paper to go into many details, but one illustration may perhaps be given of

THE EXTREME CAREFULNESS

of Luke's statements in Acts. I choose the example of his references to governors. It will be remembered that,

* See page 45.

in giving an account of Paul's visit to Cyprus, Luke introduces us to a Sergius Paulus, "proconsul" of that island (Acts xiii. 7). A proconsul was a yearly officer, representing the Roman Senate. But Cyprus, in the time of Augustus, had been an imperial province, governed by a different class of officials, "propraetors." How, then, comes Luke to give the governor the title "proconsul?" An ancient historian solves the difficulty by telling us that Augustus handed Cyprus over to the Roman Senate in exchange for another province, so that, in the words of the historian, "proconsuls began to be sent into

THAT ISLAND

also."* The fact is further established by a coin representing a Cyprian proconsul of this very reign of Claudius.

A similar, yet more singular proof of Luke's accuracy occurs a chapter or two further on. Luke calls Gallio "proconsul of Achaia" (Acts xviii. 12). Now Achaia had been governed by "proconsuls," but Tiberius had made it an imperial province, governed by "propraetors"; and so it had remained till five or six years before the time of which Luke speaks, when the Emperor Claudius restored the province to the Senate. Then proconsuls began again; and Luke is perfectly exact.

But may not the explanation be that Luke had the loose habit of calling all governors "proconsuls," and so got right by chance? No; for when we come to Thessalonica we find Luke using another name altogether, the name "politarchs" (Acts xvii. 6, 8). The title, singular to say, is found nowhere in literature but in this chapter. But here discovery comes in to supplement what history does not tell. An inscription is still legible on an arch of Thessalonica, which gives this very title to the magistrates of the place, informs us of their number, and

* Dio Cassius, liii. 12; liv. 9.

mentions the names of some who bore the office not long before the days of Paul.

The last example I take relates to Paul's stay in Malta. Here, Luke says, were "lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius" (Acts xxviii. 7). The word, translated "chief man" is literally "protos." Now, as has been ascertained from inscriptions found in the island, "protos" was the (probably) official title of the governor of Malta, and Luke designates him accordingly.*

Such instances of minute accuracy are worth a bushel of literary arguments in proof that the author of the Acts was a man well versed in the contemporary history, and had personal knowledge of the facts he wrote about.

Thus much for Acts. I add one illustration, in conclusion, from

THE GOSPEL.

Perhaps the strongest case of inaccuracy objectors have ever been able to urge against the Gospels is the mention of Quirinius in Luke ii. 2: "This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria" (R.V.). It is the same Luke who wrote the Acts who makes this statement, and the accuracy he shows on other occasions might warn us not to assume too hastily that he was in error here. Yet there did seem to be something like a mistake. It is quite true, as we know from Josephus, that Quirinius was governor of Syria, and that he conducted a census of Judæa, but this was ten years later (A.D. 6). It was, indeed, pointed out that Luke speaks of it as "a first enrolment," and this of itself suggested that he knew of a second; still the difficulty was not satisfactorily solved.

Meanwhile, in a German study, a learned author, Augustus W. Zumpt, was working away at a book on

* For details see Conybeare and Howson, or Ramsay's *Paul the Traveller.*

Roman antiquities, in the course of which he was led to investigate the subject of the Syrian presidencies. His treatment was purely antiquarian; yet Zumpt, working with his own materials, made the interesting discovery, in which most now acquiesce, that Quirinius must have been twice governor of Syria, once in B.C. 4-1, and again in A.D. 6. This practically solved the difficulty, though it still put the first governorship a year too late, if Christ's birth is correctly dated in the end of B.C. 5; for the census may well have been begun by his predecessor, in the end of his term of office, and completed under Quirinius, with whose name it is connected. Indeed. Prof. Ramsay has now established the fact of such periodical enrolments, and census-papers from Egypt have actually been recovered.*

* See his *Was Christ Born in Bethlehem?* Prof. Ramsay has an ingenious hypothesis of his own about governorship and dates.

III

"Presuppositions" in Old Testament Criticism

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"Presuppositions" in Old Testament Criticism

I HAVE indicated that the severest trial to which the Bible has been subjected in recent years has come from the side of Old Testament criticism. To this phase of the trial, therefore, I shall now, in a few papers, address myself. So wide is the field, and so complex the subject, that it will be understood that I must content myself with touching only the larger issues. But I shall try to glance at most of these.

I.

"The Higher Criticism," it is well known, professes to dissect the Bible into its elements: to determine approximately the dates and circumstances of the composition of its component parts; then, from the materials thus analysed and readjusted, to construct a living picture of the history of the people of Israel, and of the development of their religion, laws, and institutions.

It has already been made clear that not one word will be said in these papers against

LEGITIMATE CRITICISM.

Provided it be done reverently, by all means let the Bible

be subjected to the most careful scrutiny anyone can apply to it on its literary and historical sides; and if any light breaks out from the process, as, under God's guidance, there is every reason to hope it will, let it be faithfully followed, even if old ideas and time-honoured conclusions have to some extent to be modified or abandoned. This is not, indeed, the highest way of studying the Bible. Taken by itself, it is poor fare, this critical business, for any human soul to nourish itself upon. Still, criticism has its rightful and necessary place, and I have not been stinted elsewhere in my acknowledgment of the gains we owe to it. I gladly own that, as the result of criticism, many things in the Bible are far better understood than they were before, and that the study of the Old Testament, especially in its historical and prophetical parts, has undergone a remarkable freshening. Only it is fair to note that many other causes in the progress of knowledge and in the spirit of the time have contributed to this result, and criticism must not be allowed to carry off the whole credit of it.

It is not, therefore, every criticism, but

THIS CRITICISM,

which has for many years almost exclusively usurped the name, which is impugned as injurious to faith. It is often said, when attention is called to the minute dissection of the books of the Bible, and to theories of age and authorship, What, after all, does it matter? Is faith bound up with questions of doubtful disputation like these? Frequently the remonstrance is added that, in any case, it is wrong to appeal to the "harmful consequences" of a theory in disproof of its truth, when the sole question should be, Is it true? It is necessary, however, very carefully to discriminate. It is freely granted that there are many inquiries in criticism which

faith can afford to look on with equanimity.* There are books in the Bible—for example, Kings and Chronicles, compilations from earlier materials, and admittedly of late date—the authorship of which is unknown. Yet their authority is not destroyed, and it is a legitimate question how far this process of compilation may extend.

Or, take the question of

THE PENTATEUCH.

I myself take a high view of the connection of Moses with the Pentateuch. I believe this to be the view borne out by internal evidence, by the later testimony of the Old Testament, and by unbroken tradition since. Yet there are parts of the Pentateuch which we know Moses did *not* write—*e.g.*, the account of his own death (Deut. xxxiv.) ; and if it should prove (as I think probable) that different hands co-operated in the composition of this large work, that it embodied older or later records, and that it underwent repeated revision and re-editing, our faith in its essentially Mosaic character and truthfulness would not be sensibly affected.

It is a very different matter, as pointed out at the commencement, when the late dates assigned to documents are employed as leverage to destroy the credibilityof the history, and to upset, at almost every point, the Bible's witness to itself. How, a reasonable mind will inevitably ask, can anyone regard as the Word of God a book which confessedly is largely composed of fic-

*It is, at the same time, only superficially plausible to say that, in almost any department, criticism "does not matter." It is the case, *e.g.*, that the more nearly we come to contemporary sources in history, the better is our foundation. Who will deny that this fact lends importance to such questions as to whether Moses was concerned in the composition of the Pentateuch, or whether Luke wrote the third Gospel and the Acts, or whether Paul was the author of the Epistles that bear his name?

tions and incredibilities; which degrades and dishonousr God by its representations; which is full of contradictions; in which its most solemn "Thus saith the Lords" are denied; which does not scruple, on occasion, to employ the methods of fraud? Criticism of this kind

DOES EMPHATICALLY MATTER.

It is the armoury in which popular infidelity finds to-day its most effective weapons against the Bible.

This is not a matter which appeals only to academic interests. The argument from consequences needs, indeed, to be handled with caution. But in no sphere of life does any sane man close his eyes to the nature of the consequences of the theory he is opposing or defending. Is it a Fiscal Controversy? The stake is held to be the prosperity or ruin of the Empire. Is it a question of personal conduct? The beneficial or harmful consequences of a particular line of action are never forgotten to be urged. Grave or hurtful consequences are at least always regarded as a reason for the narrowest scrutiny of the principles or theories that lead up to them. They are often more. "By their fruits ye shall know them" is given as a test bearing directly upon truth.*

It is carefully to be observed, in entering on the inquiry about criticism, that

THE BOOK PROPOSED TO BE SUBJECTED

to this ordeal does not come to the trial without having something to say for itself on the points directly at issue.

*Hence the ineptness of such criticism on this point as the following :—"The real question is: Are the generally accepted results of Biblical criticism substantially correct? If they are, we must accept them, no matter what consequences they involve. 'Let's have the light even if we perish in it.'" Is it probable that the true light will issue in destruction?

The investigation does not take place *in vacuo*. The slate is not clean at the commencement of the critics' proceedings. The Bible has a character, an identity, a witness of its own, which must be taken account of in any examination of its claims. It comes into court with very distinct claims. It professes to be a history of revelation. It gives itself out as a record of God's dealings with man in revelation from the beginning. It unfolds the course of that revelation through its successive dispensations. It has its own account to give of the origin of its laws and institutions. Its narrative is connected with great historic personages—Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, the prophets, culminating in Jesus Christ, the goal of the whole. The history, accordingly has

AN ORGANIC, PROGRESSIVE CHARACTER,

is charged with deep ideas, moves forward under the impulse of an indwelling divine purpose, which cannot be eliminated from its parts without destroying the significance of the whole.

More even must be said of it than this. The Old Testament abounds in claims to be, or convey, the Word of God to its own time and people. Jesus accepted it as such (*e.g.*, Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10; v. 17, 18; xv. 3, 6; Luke xxiv. 26, 27; John v. 39, 45-47). He appeals to its narratives, even the earliest, in proof of the great principles of His religion (Matt. xix. 4-6; xxii. 31, 32). The New Testament declares this to be its character, and, in the essentials of its message, affirms it to be the Word of God to Christians still (*e.g.*, Rom. i. 1, 2; iii. 1, 2; 1 Cor. x. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 17). The Old Testament gives, besides, good reasons for these claims in the spiritual powers with which its revelation is shown to be charged. The onus lies on the critic, if he will, of dis-

proving this character of the Bible (many, of course, do not desire to disprove it). It cannot be simply ignored, or treated as if the claim was not there. The critic cannot be allowed, in oblivion of all this, to start

THEORY-BUILDING

on the origin and course of Israel's history and religion, as if nothing already was given. Yet, as we are soon to see, this is precisely what the modern criticism, in its most eminent representatives, does.

It will, in truth, become apparent, as we proceed, that nearly everything in this critical study of the Old Testament depends on the principles by which we are guided, and the spirit in which the study is conducted. Criticism is like the fiery-cloudy pillar which led the Israelites through the Red Sea: it has a double aspect—light to the hosts in front; darkness to their pursuers. To one man, imbued with the Psalmist's love of God's law (Ps. cxix. 18), criticism discloses endless harmonies and agreements. To another it discovers nothing but difficulties, incredibilities, contradictions, moral monstrosities. It follows that we cannot be too careful about our starting points and methods.

II.

This brings me to a closer scrutiny of the methods of

THE NEWER CRITICISM

of whose procedure I complain. Criticism, I know, is for the present so settled on its lees in its confidence in its immovable results that little that anyone can say will make any impression on it. It points, in the familiar phrase, to its "assured results," and there is held to be an end of it. There are, however, several questions which press for answer here. A first is, *Are* the results

settled? Next, if they are, *How* are they settled? And yet another is, *Should* they be settled? And the middle question of these three—the question of the *How*—is as important as either of the others. It is the one I propose to look at to begin with.

The story of how criticism has come to reach

ITS PRESENT ADVANCED POSITION

is too long to be here even entered on. Two periods, in general, may be distinguished:—

First, there was the period of the "literary" criticism, with its "results" in the analysis of the documents of the Pentateuch now commonly accepted (J, E, D, P, with their developments), the assigning of Deuteronomy to the age of Josiah, the attributing of the second part to Isaiah to the exile, of Daniel to the age of the Maccabees, &c.

Next came the period of the so-called "historical-religious" criticism, inaugurated (with some precursors) by Graf in 1866, and carried forward by Kuenen, Wellhausen, and others, till it has become the reigning school. In its hands history, laws, religion, all go into the melting-pot, with consequences that will afterwards become apparent. Its distinctive and most plausible feature is the theory of

THE THREE CODES

—viz., the Book of the Covenant, the Deuteronomic, and the Priestly Codes—assumed to correspond with successive periods of the history. The Levitical Code, assigned by the Bible to Moses, is post-exilian. The order of "Levites" takes its origin from the "degraded priests" of Ezek. xliv.

If now the question is asked, By what *method* are these "results" obtained? the answer will confidently be

given—by careful literary and historical investigation. And I have no disposition to deny that honest and careful investigation *has* played a large part in the history of criticism. Critical theories are often hypotheses to explain real phenomena, and it is only fair to give careful attention to any facts they bring to light and seek to account for. But is this all? If it were, it is safe to say we should not have the results now shown. But it is not. There is

A DEEPER FORCE AT WORK

whose action has profoundly controlled and directed the operations of Old Testament criticism from the first. The force I speak of is the rationalistic conviction that a supernatural explanation of facts cannot be admitted. From the beginning Old Testament criticism has been committed to this idea, and it is under its influence, very largely, that the modern theory we are now discussing has been built up. This preconception, connected with what is called "the modern view of the world," enters deeply into both Old Testament and New Testament criticism at the present hour.

I take here a striking illustration from the New Testament, which applies with equal force to the Old. Germany and other countries have been flooded of late with books, some of a popular order, setting forth the lineaments of a non-supernatural Jesus, and of a Christianity divorced from "Pauline" ideas. Against this so-called "religious-historical" view of Jesus and Christianity, as represented by two writers, Bousset and Wrede, the Ritschlian Professor, Julius Kaftan, of Berlin, utters himself in a trenchant pamphlet, *Jesus und Paulus*, which, in its own way, is a sign of the times. His words are weighty. This new theorising, he declares emphatically, "has its roots in quite other soil

than that of method." "It is," he says, "put briefly, the so-called 'modern view of the world' (*moderne Weltanschauung*) which stands behind it" (p. 4). He shows how this leads to a quite unhistorical representation of both Jesus and Paul, and concludes a searching investigation with the judgment: "I conclude, therefore, that this 'Jesus-religion' is an affair without roots. As it has points of support neither in the Gospel of Jesus nor in primitive Christianity, so it will never approve itself, not to-day, and not in the future, as a possible form of Christianity" (p. 77).

Exactly the same thing is true of the modern theorising on the Old Testament. It has its roots not in method but in

AN ANTI-SUPERNATURALISTIC PRESUPPOSITION.

De Wette, in his *Introduction*, laid it down that the miraculous narratives of the Old Testament "have their foundation partly in the deficiency and narrowness of human knowledge at that time . . .and partly in the distance of time between the event itself and the written account of it," and held that they were to be treated as "historical myths" (II. p. 25). The criticism of Kuenen and Wellhausen is ruled by this idea. Prof. G. B. Foster, of Chicago University, declares, with the endorsement of that body, in his recent book on *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, that "to the scientific understanding of the world, and to the intellectual aptitude superinduced by science, a miracle cannot be admitted"

I have been criticised for saying, in my book on *God's Image in Man*, that the Christian view of the world is *not* the "modern" view, and that we ought to have the courage to declare this. Kaftan utters himself in much stronger language than I have cared to use. "I am no lover," he says, "of the modern view of the world; rather, I find it astonishing that so many thinking men should be led astray by this bugbear" (p. 72). See page 151.

(p. 130), and devotes a large section of his work to the proof of this thesis.

I know, of course, very well that many who have adopted and work with these theories retain their faith in the supernatural. Their reason for doing so is the very just one that they perceive quite clearly that, with any amount of critical violence, you cannot get the supernatural out of the Bible. It is there, and will reassert itself. Their problem, accordingly, is to work these two things together, and the result is a compromise which will not stand, since the things attempted to be combined are opposite in principle. Fruit grown upon a tree of such pronouncedly rationalistic root does not become good simply by being served up in a Christian basket.*

III.

The truth of what is now said becomes more evident, when, from its underlying principle, we look to

THE WORKING OUT

of this modern critical theory. The Bible is a book full of the supernatural from beginning to end. It is the history of the development of a supernatural purpose, issuing in the Incarnation, and in a supernatural economy of redemption. It is a story, from the Call of Abraham downwards, of the entrance of God into history in supernatural word and deed. It is clear that the critical

*The reply sometimes made to an argument of this kind, viz., that the believer also has his "presuppositions," is, in this connection, without force. The difference is, that the believer's presuppositions are those which the Bible itself yields; the critics' are not, but the negation of the Bible's postulates. The believer, accordingly interprets the Bible along the Bible's own lines; the opposite view can only be maintained by continual drafts on the historic imagination, and by bold and arbitrary treatment of the text and history.

view, having as its postulate the denial of all this, has no alternative but to begin by sweeping the whole of it away. This, accordingly, is what it actually does. The process has two stages, in each of which the characteristic vice of the method is laid bare. The method, first, compels rejection, almost *in toto*, of the history we have; next, it invokes imagination to fill up the blank by devising a *new* history, fashioned on its own principle of

RELIGIOUS EVOLUTION.

As to the completeness of the sweep made of the existing history, there can be no question. Mr. Addis has just published a volume on *Hebrew Religion*,* in which the patriarchal age is not so much as mentioned. To use a phrase of Duhm's, applied to the Mosaic period it is simply "wiped out."† The same is true of the age of Moses, even where the lawgiver's personality and religious leadership of Israel are admitted. The history as we have it disappears. But some go further. In an important work lately published by Prof. Ed. Meyer, of Berlin, on *Israel and its Neighbours*,‡ the thesis is laid down and defended that Moses is no historical personality (p. 569). This will comfort Dr. Cheyne, who cannot believe that Moses was even, like Sargon, "a historical personage with mythic accretions." The book of Joshua is a "romance." I gave in my volume on the Old Testament a typical example of this "historical" method from Budde, which I may here reproduce. He is

*[The criticisms on Mr. Addis here and in later papers are allowed to remain; but I desire now to say that I have no doubt of this writer's full acceptance of the great doctrines of our common Christian faith. I cannot change my view on the consistency.]

†Duhm boasts in his work on the Prophets (p. 19) that by the transference of *a single source* (the Priestly Law) into the post-exilian time, "at one stroke the 'Mosaic' period is wiped out."

‡*Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme.*

explaining how the Kenite god of Moses became transformed into the Yahweh of a later period by the absorption of "other gods" into Himself. "Yahweh had not expelled or annihilated them [the Canaanitish Gods], but had made them subject: He had divested them of their personality by absorbing them into His own person. *To be sure, neither the law, nor the historical narratives, nor the prophets say a word of all this,* yet it can be proved," &c.*

Another branch of the same procedure is the removal by critical expurgation of any passages or references in the history or prophets which do not suit the critical scheme. The high priest, for instance, Wellhausen tells us, is a creation of the exile. He is "unknown even to Ezekiel."† Yet the high priest is mentioned at least four times in the preceding history (2 Kings xii. 10; xxii. 4-8; xxiii., 4), and the texts are sustained by the parallel passages in Chronicles and by the Septuagint. What is to be done with them? They are simply *struck out* as interpolations.

The passage above quoted from Budde serves equally as an illustration of the counter process of

FILLING UP FROM IMAGINATION

the blanks created by this annihilation of the existing history. Examples would be endless. The whole critical theory of the evolution of Israel's religion from a primitive animism to the creation of the Priestly Code in the exile

**Religion of Israel*, p. 41. Italics are mine. The above is a suggestive commentary on such panegyrics on the newer criticism as those in Prof. Kent's *Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament*, "Not a grain of truth which the Bible contains has been destroyed or permanently obscured. Instead, the *débris* of time honoured traditions and dogmas have been cleared away, and the true Scriptures at last stand forth again in their pristine splendour," &c.! (p. 16).

†*Hist. of Israel*, pp. 142-3.

is, in my judgment, a case of it, and it was seen a in previous paper that Hugo Winckler, the Orientalist, is of the same opinion. Only an instance or two need be given.

It was mentioned before that the "Levites" in the Priestly Code are supposed to have taken their origin in the "degradation" of the unfaithful priests of Ezek. xliv. There is no evidence that such a degradation was ever carried out, much less that the "Levites," already found at the return from exile (Ezra ii. 40; iii. 8, &c.), were the creation of any such ban; yet we are treated with imaginary pictures of the "vehement struggles" (adumbrated in the story of Korah) of these degraded priests in the exile to regain their lost privileges! * Nothing could be more baseless.

Again, the Decalogue is denied to Moses, but the fiction of a "second decalogue," which is supposed to be more primitive, is extracted from Exodus xxxiv. 14-26. Yet Mr. Addis, who serves up this "earliest decalogue" without demur in his *Hebrew Religion* (pp. 117-19), had himself told us in his larger work on the Hexateuch (I. p. 157), in this agreeing with very many critics, that the disentangling of the alleged "ten words" is "mere guesswork!" In the same writer a proof that "the doorposts [in Israel] were under the protection of penates, or spirits of the household," is found in the fact that the master took his bondsmen "to the door-post, and pierced his ear with an awl, by that act bringing him to Elohim" (p. 37; *Cf.* Exodus xxi. 6). What can be clearer than that "Elohim" here means simply "judges" (E.V. "shall bring him unto the judges"), as unquestionably it does in 1 Sam. ii. 25? More examples will be found when we come to deal with worship.

E.g., Kautzsch, in his *Lit. of O. T.*, p. 117.

IV.

To prove the Wellhausen theory, however, to be arbitrary and fallacious would avail little, if it were not possible to put some

POSITIVE CONSTRUCTION

in its place, and to show that the Biblical representation, to which the Wellhausen conception is opposed, is capable of vindication on its own account. It has been pointed out that the most fundamental and plausible part of this hypothesis—that which has gained for it, undoubtedly, most acceptance—is its skilful theory of the "three Codes." It may serve a useful purpose at this stage, therefore, briefly to bring the Biblical and the critical views on these Codes into contrast, and to test their respective merits.

The comparison is crucial in other ways. It is sometimes said that there is no claim in the Pentateuch itself to

MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP.

But is this the case? Does not the Decalogue claim to be Mosaic? Does not every Code of Law in the Old Testament claim to be from Moses? Moses is said to have written down the laws in the Book of the Covenant (Ex. xxiv. 3-7). He is expressly said to have written the law in Deuteronomy (Deut. xxxi. 9). He gave the Levitical Laws. The arguments against the Mosaic authorship formerly drawn from the absence of the art of writing and the state of culture of the time are vanishing with better knowledge, and objection now chiefly turns on the supposed incompatibility of the Codes with each other, and with the history.

CRITICAL THEORY OF THE CODES.

Criticism undertakes to show that the three Codes in

question—the Book of the Covenant, the Deuteronomic Code, and the Levitical Code—are non-Mosaic, partly on the ground of their internal incompatibility, but chiefly because they can be proved to belong to successive periods of history by their correspondence with the conditions of these periods. As Prof. Peake, in a lecture before quoted,* succinctly puts the matter: "By proving that these Codes arose in different ages, and were elicited by different social and religious conditions, it [criticism] has removed the great stumbling-block presented by the spectacle of radically inconsistent Codes given by the same legislator with an interval of a few months at most between them" (the interval between Deuteronomy and the other Codes, it may be remarked, was nearly forty years). The law in Exodus xx.-xxiii., it is held, with its provision for a multiplicity of altars (Ch. xx. 24), ruled till the age of Josiah; then came the movement for the centralisation of worship inaugurated by Deuteronomy, taken to be "a prophetic programme"; the Levitical Code is post-exilian, as is thought to be proved by the absence of all reference to its characteristic institutions earlier. So it used to be shown that the Fourth Gospel could not be earlier than the middle of the second century, because it reflected the conditions of the conflict with Gnosticism!

Historical and legal details will be considered in another connection. I wish now to try to show that, from the Bible's own point of view, the whole theory rests on

A FUNDAMENTAL OVERSIGHT.

A constant assumption of the school I am criticising is that the Levitical Code is put forth as a fixed, immutable system of laws, given once for all in the wilderness, and intended to regulate the life and practice of the Israelites,

*Manchester *Inaugural Lectures*, p. 32.

without change or modification, in all future time. The late Prof. W. R. Smith makes this, which he calls "The Traditional Theory of the Old Testament History," the basis of his whole exposition of the theory of the Codes. "As soon," he says, "as we lay down the position that the system of the ceremonial law, embracing as it does the whole life of every Jew, was completed and prescribed as an authoritative code for Israel before the conquest of Canaan, we have an absolute rule for measuring the whole future history of the nation, and the whole significance of subsequent revelation under the whole Testament."*

Now look at the facts.

Two things are clear as day in the history of the Mosaic times: the people looked forward to Canaan, *yet* the ceremonial legislation, in its immediate form, was all but wholly adapted to the conditions of the wilderness.

Let anyone read carefully the laws and narratives attributed to the Priestly Code in Exod. xxv. ff., Leviticus, and Numbers, and he will see that, throughout, the arrangements described are

ADAPTED TO THE WILDERNESS,

and that many of them have no meaning except there. The arrangements, *e.g.*, for the consecration of Aaron and his sons; the census-lists of the tribes; the arrangements for the disposition of the tribes in their several camps around the tabernacle; the elaborate instructions for the march of the host; the choice of the Levites and details of their duties in the charge and conveyance of the tabernacle in its journeyings; the directions for the

**Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, pp. 298, ff. (1st Edition). Even on this showing, does the conclusion follow? How would it fare with the New Testament Church if tested by the "absolute rule" of Christ's teaching? How many epochs and passages in its history would have to be ruled out as "unhistorical?"

making of the tabernacle itself—for the tabernacle in its nature was a structure which was bound in time to wear out and need replacement. Even the laws and ritual of the sacrifices and feasts, where there is obviously more that is intended to be permanent, are, in the first instance, cast into the wilderness forms. We have, *e.g.*, the direction for the carrying forth of the bullock of the sin-offering, "without the camp, unto a clean place," and burning of it there (Lev. iv. 12), which so stumbled Bishop Colenso. Evidently the whole cast of such legislation would become unsuitable on entering the land. Only the principles, in many cases, would remain. An observance in the letter would be a manifest impossibility.

A vast mass of the Levitical legislation, therefore, is, on the face of it, of a *temporary* character. It corresponds with the description of it in the Epistle to the Hebrews as an economy that "decayeth" and "is ready to vanish away" (Heb. viii. 13). This is a fact of weighty importance in its bearing on the difficulties which the critics raise about the Codes. Two things, apart from the very direct presumption it affords of an authorship in the Mosaic age,* follow from it:—

*Bleek, one of the older critical writers, made good use of this in his *Introduction*, as proving "that an important part of the laws and ordinances of the Pentateuch is of such a nature that, judging from their purport and form, it is impossible that they could belong to any other age than the Mosaic; also that the historical part of the Pentateuch is generally confirmed by them, since they relate so clearly to the circumstances contained in the history." (*Introd.* I. p. 225, E. T.). He says that when we meet with laws, as those mentioned above, "which refer in their whole tenor to a state of things utterly unknown in the period subsequent to Moses, and to circumstances existing in the Mosaic age, and to that only, it is in the highest degree likely that these laws, not only in their essential purport proceeded from Moses, but also that they were written down by Moses, or at least in the Mosaic age" (p. 212).

1. It explains why the traces of this Levitical Code are

RELATIVELY SCANT

in the periods that succeeded Moses. They are not nearly so scant, it will be discovered, by any means, as the critics try to make out. Great allowance must also, in fairness, be made, in Hebrew as in Christian history, for times of religious disorganisation (*e.g.*, the Judges), corruption, and declension. But it is not always sufficiently considered how large a part of the Levitical legislation was *necessarily* left behind in the simple transition from life in the wilderness to settled life in Canaan. Priests and Levites, *e.g.*, are no longer found grouped in their tents around the tabernacle ; but a quite different provision is made for them in the institution of the Levitical cities (Num. xxxv. ; Josh. xxi.).* The ritual law was carried forward as far as practicable, yet under new forms and conditions, which made reference to the laws in their wilderness forms unlikely.† When the temporary part of the legislation is stripped off, the laws that remain are of a kind which it would be very difficult to prove were not always of validity in Israel.

Besides this, it seems to me quite a mistake to suppose that the godly in Israel ever were, or were intended to be,

*It is possible that, like many other laws, this law of the Levitical cities was never very strictly carried out, though there are instances implying its existence. (Cf. 1 Sam. vi. 15 ; 1 Kings ii. 26 ; Jer. i. 1). But is it credible that Ezra should have given to the people for the first time a law declaring that forty-eight cities had been set apart from time immemorial for this purpose when everybody present must have known that no such cities ever existed? Yet such is the critical theory.

†*Cf.* my *Problem of the O.T.*, pp. 300, 325.

SLAVES TO THE LETTER

of the law to the extent that many suppose (1 Sam. xv. 21).* The moral law was ever above the ritual (Cf. Matt. xii. 3-7). As necessity arose, laws were freely altered or modified, of course under proper authority. David, on the testimony of the "Levitical" Chronicler, reorganised the whole worship of the tabernacle (1 Chron. xxiii. ff.). The tax imposed by Nehemiah was the *third* of a shekel, instead of the *half* shekel of the law (Neh. x. 32). When all the circumstances are considered, we may begin to feel with Dillmann that the allusions, even to ritual, in the history are as numerous as we had any right to expect.

2. It leads us to anticipate that, later, new laws

MODIFYING THE OLD

would be given in prospect of entering the land. If the Levitical law, as just said, at once looked forward to entering Canaan (*e.g.*, Lev. xxv. 2), yet, in its immediate shape, was wholly adapted to conditions in the wilderness, it is only what we might expect that, as the time for the change approached, new or supplementary ordinances would be given (*e.g.*, the directions for the Levitical cities, Num. xxxv.; laws of inheritance, Num. xxxvi.), and that in any rehearsal or re-promulgation certain changes, readaptations, and modifications of laws would be made. This last is precisely what we find in the Book of Deuteronomy, which looks forward not only to life in Canaan, but to a future settled place for God's house, in room of the shifting tabernacle, and to a stricter centralisation of worship than was then possible (Ch. xii.). It will be seen afterwards that there is in this no "radical inconsistency" with the older legislation,

**Ibid*, pp. 179, 504.

which also has the unity of God's worship as its ideal. So far from Deuteronomy "contradicting" the law about the altar of earth or stone in Ex. xx. 24-25, it directly falls back on that law in ordaining an altar to be set up on Mount Ebal (Deut. xxvii. 4-7).

V.

Here, then, it seems to me, we have, in great part,

THE REAL SECRET

of the peculiarities of the three Codes, on an illusory interpretation of which the new theory of Israel's law and religion is made to hinge. When the right perspective is attained, the "radical inconsistencies" of the critic's imaginings largely fall away of their own accord. The oldest Code in Ex. xx-xxiii. cannot stand in essential disagreement with the Levitical ritual law, for, except in the law of the altar (Ex. xx. 24-26), which is quite general, and probably embodies old usage, and one or two other points (the feasts, Ex. xxiii. 14-19), it deals, as civil law,* with a different class of subjects altogether. As little can "radical" inconsistency be alleged between this Code and Deuteronomy, seeing that, apart again from the altar-law, the Deuteronomic Code is, by all but universal admission, based on this older legislation. The supposed discrepancy on the central sanctuary will be discussed after.

The only crucial question, then, is as to

THE RELATION OF THE LEVITICAL LAW TO DEUTERONOMY,

and on this point the Bible and the Wellhausen criticism *do* stand "radically" opposed. The Bible makes the

*In form and character, as shown by the recently discovered code of Hammurabi (the Amraphel of Gen. xiv.), this Code has on it the impress of great antiquity.

Levitical law the earlier, representing it as the product of the wilderness, with which its form agrees. Criticism, on the other hand, as we have seen, tears it away from its Mosaic basis, and carries it down to post-exilian times; puts it after the prophets. Instead of the order "law and prophets," we have now the order "prophets and law."

But, apart from other objections, is this likely? It is the favourite theory at present, but is it natural or reasonable? As we formerly saw, Hugo Winckler, who knows as much about Oriental codes as most, decidedly rejects it on historical grounds. Law and prophets, he tells, are present from the beginning (*op. cit.*, p. 47). But is it reasonable in itself?

IS PROGRESS BACKWARD?

Which is the more natural order, from outward to inward, or from inward to outward? From rudiments to more spiritual teaching? Or from spiritual teaching back to "beggarly elements?" The law has a suitability and value in its own place as a stepping-stone to something higher; a prefiguration of more spiritual blessings to come. But how shall we regard it as any part of "the Word of God," if it represents an unspiritual lapse from prophetic teaching to an infinitely lower level? is, in truth, a concoction of exilian priests, who know no better way of commending their fictions than by passing them off in the name of Moses! Having begun in the Spirit, was it God's will that His chosen people should be made perfect in the flesh? Later Judaism,

*The opposition of "priestly" and "prophetic" tendencies may easily be exaggerated. Isaiah received his call in vision in the temple; Jeremiah was of priestly descent; priests and prophets acted together at the finding of the law in Josiah's reign; Deuteronomy is marked by both tendencies; Ezekiel was a priest; Joel, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi do honour to the law, &c.

no doubt, represents a descent into an exaggerated legalism; but was this the proper order or outcome of God's dispensations?

How, finally, does it stand with the Codes themselves in the

RELATION OF DEPENDENCE?

It is not difficult to show that, in manifold ways, as scholars of the highest standing maintain, the Levitical law, or portions of it, are implied in Deuteronomy. On the other hand, the peculiarities of Deuteronomy are not reflected in the Levitical law. There is allusion to the Priestly law in Deuteronomy (Cf. Deut. xiv. 4-20, which Dr. Driver admits is "in great measure verbally identical" with Lev. xi, 2-23). But the Priestly law shows no acquaintance with Deuteronomy. What conclusion is reasonable, but that the Priestly law is the earlier of the two?

IV

"Settled Results" in Criticism

"Settled Results" in Criticism

NO argument is more frequently employed to silence objection to modern critical theories than the alleged agreement of competent scholars as to the main results of their criticism. The labours of over a century have issued in certain "settled results," which it is held to be folly and presumption for non-experts any longer to question. Harnack's words, quoted in a previous paper, show that the same temper is carried into New Testament criticism, and embody his vigorous protest against it.

I have venture to enter

A DEMURRER

against this summary method of foreclosing a controversy of such magnitude. I have pointed out that, even if the results could be regarded as settled, there is a prior question to be answered: *How* are they settled? I have tried to show that from the first a pronouncedly rationalistic strain has entered into this criticism, and that the methods it employs are not such as to command our confidence. If further proof were needed of the predominantly rationalistic character of the movement, it could be furnished abundantly from the historical sketches in Prof. Foster's recent work on *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, in which the fact is dwelt on with approval (pp. 94,

114, &c.). Without dwelling further on this, I come now to deal with the other two questions I proposed, which raise a direct issue:

ARE THE RESULTS SETTLED?

And, if they are, *Should* they be settled?

I.

It is desirable, first, to have one or two specimens of the kind of assurance expressed. I take these from recent writers already cited.

Mr. Addis, in his book on *Hebrew Religion*, under the heading of "Results of Criticism Assumed," writes: "On many questions of capital moment—such, *e.g.*, as the dates at which the documents composing the Pentateuch were written down, the date and authorship of most of the prophetic books—there is practical unanimity among men whose knowledge entitles them to judge. This agreement has been slowly attained; it has been severely tested by discussion, nor is there the slightest ground for thinking that it will ever be seriously disturbed" (pp. 11, 12). He admits that there are "other matters," as, *e.g.*, the extent to which the genuine works of the prophets have been interpolated by the scribes, which are still "shrouded in uncertainty"—a serious qualification of the alleged agreement.

Let us listen next to Prof. Peake, in his Manchester lecture on "The Present Movement of Biblical Science." "We need not hesitate," he says, "to claim that many assured results have been reached, which the future is not likely to reverse." After giving an enumeration which includes "the analysis of the Pentateuch into four main documents, the identification of the law on which Josiah's reformation was based with some form of the Deuteronomic Code, the compilation of that Code in the reign of Manasseh

at the earliest, the fixing of the Priestly Code to a date later than Ezekiel, the highly composite character of some parts of the prophetic literature, especially the Book of Isaiah, the post-exilian origin of most of the Psalms, and large parts of the Book of Proverbs, the composition of Job not earlier than the exile and probably later, the Maccabean date of Daniel, and the slightly earlier date of Ecclesiastes," he adds: "On all these points it would be possible to name dissentient voices, but, speaking generally, these results would probably secure the adhesion of most Old Testament critics" * (p. 32).

This, no doubt, looks imposing. The simplest way of testing it, I think, will be to give

A BRIEF, UNVARNISHED SKETCH

of the actual course of development and present position of criticism on the subjects named. I have noted already the judgment of Winckler and his school on the Wellhausen theory of religion, on which so much of the criticism depends. But I take here the literary criticism on its own merits. Probably, at the end of the survey, the reader may be less reminded of "assured results" than

* So, writing as early as 1887, Prof. Briggs said of the analysis of the Hexateuch: "There has been a steady advance, until the present position of agreement has been reached in which Jew and Christian, Roman Catholic and Protestant, Rationalistic and Evangelical scholars, Reformed and Lutheran, Presbyterian and Episcopal, Unitarian, Methodist, and Baptist, all concur. . . . There are no Hebrew Professors on the Continent of Europe, so far as I know, who would deny the literary analysis of the Pentateuch into the four great documents. . . . The Professors of Hebrew in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Edinburgh, and tutors in a large number of theological colleges hold to the same opinion. . . . I doubt whether there is any question of scholarship whatever in which there is greater agreement among scholars than on this question of the literary analysis of the Hexateuch."—*Presbyt. Reviev*, 1887, p. 340; Cf. his *Hexateuch*, 1893, pp. 94, 144.

of the famous picture in Dante's poem of an eager crowd circling round and round in pursuit of a whirling flag, which perpetually eludes its grasp.* The critical chase of certainty in "results" seems to me well-nigh as hopeless.

II.

Criticism began, as is well known, with the observation of

THE ALTERNATION OF THE DIVINE NAMES,

"Elohim" (God) and "Jehovah" (E.V. "Lord"), in certain sections of the Book of Genesis (up to Exod. vi).† Soon literary peculiarities were discovered distinguishing these sections—named respectively "Elohistic" and "Jehovistic." By and by it was noticed that this distinction did not cover the whole field. Certain parts of the Elohistic narrative lacked the literary marks of the other parts (especially after Ch. xx.), and closely resembled the Jehovistic portions in everything but the use of the divine name. Criticism now took the bold step of separating these newly-distinguished parts and erecting them into a separate document, known thenceforth as the Second Elohist, or E. Hitherto the Elohistic document had been regarded as a complete, continuous history, and the Jehovistic parts had been viewed as fragmentary and supplementary. Now these, also, were regarded as forming a continuous document, thenceforth designated J. As far back as the days of De Wette Deuteronomy had already been separated

*Ed io, che riguardai, vidi un' insegna
Che, girando, correva tanto ratta,
Che d'ogni posa mi pareva indegna ;
E dietro le venia si lunga tratta
Di gente, &c.—*Inf.*, Canto III.

†For a fuller account of these theories, with names and dates, see my *Problem of the O.T.*, ch. vii.

from the rest of the Pentateuch, and, on grounds of style and law, relegated to the age of Josiah. This is known as D.

Criticism had now fairly entered on its speculative stage, and

THE "FOUR DOCUMENTS,"

which rank among the "assured results," are well in sight. There is the original Elohist, latterly known as P, a priestly work, to which the framework of the narrative in Genesis, and the Levitical laws, belong; there are the popular (so-called "prophetic") narratives of J and E; and there is the Josianic prophetic law-book, D. As to age, up to this time the Elohistic work (P) was regarded as beyond question the oldest of all—either Mosaic, or, in its legal parts, largely Mosaic; at latest, of the days of Samuel or Saul; J and E were dated about the days of the undivided kingdom, or shortly after.

Then came

THE *VOLTE FACE*

of the Graf school, by which the "settled results" of the previous period were precisely reversed, and the whole Levitical Code was lifted down bodily from the beginning to the end of Israel's history, the narrative part with which it was connected soon following. The Elohistic "document," from being the oldest of the four, now became the youngest. It was as if a man, who before stood on his feet, was suddenly turned over, and made to stand on his head. The result was naturally a considerable internal derangement. Vision was affected, and things generally took on an upside-down look. The history was reconstructed in a new perspective. The Mosaic period, as Duhm said, was "wiped out." Mosaic laws, the tabernacle, the Aaronic priesthood, the Levites, Passover laws, &c., became "fiction." As

Colenso put it: "For all those who are convinced of the substantial truth of the above results, the whole ritualistic system, as a system of divine institution, comes at once to the ground. . . . The whole support of this system is struck away when it is once ascertained that the Levitical legislation of the Pentateuch is entirely the product of a very late age, a mere figment of the post-captivity priesthood." *

J and E were now commonly put in the time of the divided monarchy, say from 850 to 750 B.C. (according to which was put first), *i.e.*, before Amos. Further, as the two were so closely united, they were assumed to have been combined into one work (JE), some time before their final union with P after the exile. One important consequence of the new dating was that, as the source P was now put later than JE, it became impossible consistently to argue that P "knew nothing" of this or that matter contained in the older narratives. Wellhausen owns that P's narrative throughout

PRESUPPOSES AND RUNS PARALLEL TO

that of JE.† It could not, therefore, wilfully contradict JE.

It might be supposed that, having reached the bottom in this inversion of previous theories, criticism would now indeed "settle," and be at peace. We are only, however, as we soon discover, at the beginning of new developments. The "four documents," which, we are told, are among the "assured results," begin themselves to split up, and

DETAIL INTO A SERIES

under each denomination, which effectually disposes of their unity. The original J disintegrates into a J^1, J^2, J; E similarly into an E^1, E^2, E^3; P, in Kuenen's hands, gets

* *Pent.*, vi. Pref. p. xi. † *History of Israel*, pp. 295-6.

the length of a P^4, and there is needed for the processes of union a like series of "Redactors," R^1, R^2, R^3, &c. As history knows absolutely nothing of these hypothetical entities, they can be multiplied to any extent at pleasure. The paragraphs, verses, or fragments of verses to be assigned to each are now picked out and exhibited, as they are, *e.g.*, in the Oxford *Hexateuch*.

It is easy to see, as this process goes on, that we are on the verge of fresh transformations. The members of the series so flow together that it speedily becomes impossible to maintain their identity; accordingly, as the next development along this line, we have the dropping of individualities altogether, and the courageous conversion of the J, E, P, D, and R series (our "four documents") into

"SCHOOLS,"

which extend downwards, no one can quite tell how far. Thus, as in the ancient Heraclitean philosophy, "All flows." How any reasonable mind is to figure to itself these various "schools" (of whose existence, remember, we have no evidence) with their several characteristics in the use of the divine names and otherwise, flowing on side by side, without mingling, within the narrow limits of Judæa (the Northern Kingdom is out of the question after 722 B.C.), and afterwards in the exile, for some centuries, is not explained, and I do not stop to inquire.

Is the end even yet reached in this singular evolution of "assured results"? It does not appear so. At an early stage the J and E analysis was carried forward from the Pentateuch into the Book of Joshua, and for the criticism of the Pentateuch was substituted that of

THE "HEXATEUCH."

But might not this process be carried still further: into the Book of Judges, into Samuel, into Kings—when

"schools" come on the scene, even through the whole Old Testament? So many scholars think, and this seems to be the direction in which Old Testament criticism is now moving. I cite in illustration a significant passage from the able Montauban theologian before quoted, M. Westphal. He is speaking in the name of Old Testament science on the application of

"THE HISTORICAL METHOD."

"All the documents of the Old Testament," he says, "will be submitted to a rigorous exegesis and criticism relative to their contents, their date, and their author. . . . This work will lead to our establishing, for example, that the historical books of the old Testament—from Genesis to Nehemiah—are not, as it seems after the division introduced by the rabbis, a series of 16 or 17 distinct works, written successively by different authors, but that they constitute, in reality, two great sources of history, ceaselessly amplified, enriched, and extended which in their first pages blend their narrations, and proceed, both of them, from the recital of the creation of the world to the last tribulations of the Kingdom of Israel and of Judah."* (The two sources are the "prophetic" and the "priestly.")

III.

Still, within even these very wide limits now reached may it not be affirmed that there is, after all, a large basis of agreement among the critics? To test this, I propose to look at some of

THE CRUCIAL POINTS

more closely. I may, however, here, reproduce from my own volume two sentences from leading critics, which are as eloquent on the point as anything I can hope to advance.

* *Jehovah, les Étapes de la Révélation*, p. 18 ff.

"Settled Results" in Criticism

Professor Kautzsch, of Halle, in the front rank of Old Testament scholars, makes this remarkable statement: "In the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua it is only with regard to P that something approaching to unanimity has been attained."* Kuenen, another foremost authority, says of JE: "As the analysis has been carried gradually further, it has become increasingly evident that the critical question is far more difficult and involved than was at first supposed, and the solutions which seemed to have been secured have been, in whole or part, brought into question again."†

Take now some examples on the leading issues. The simile of the "whirling flag" may often recur to us as we proceed.

On nearly every point in regard to the

ALLEGED J AND E DOCUMENTS

—on date, place of origin, relation to each other (earlier or later), extent—it might easily be shown that leading critics are completely at sixes and sevens. Confident statements are often made, *e.g.*, that J is "Judæan" in origin, is about a century older than E, &c. But these positions are directly challenged by others equally eminent. The question of priority, Mr. Addis confesses, "is still one of the most vexed questions in the criticism of the Hexateuch."‡ Yet much depends upon it.

So marked, again, is the resemblance between the two supposed documents that it is admitted to be hardly possible to distinguish them after the criterion of the divine names fails in Genesis. What one critic attributes to J or E, another frequently gives to the rival source. An outstanding example is Ex. xxi.-xxiii., which Wellhausen, Westphal, &c., assign to J, while commonly

* *Lit. of O. T.*, p. 226. † *Hexateuch*, p. 139. ‡ *Docs. of Hex. I.* p. lxxxi.

it is given to E.* On the question of extent, the divergence of opinion is acute. Some can trace the presence of J in Judges, Samuel, 1 Kings, "with perfect certainty"; others deny it. Wellhausen and Steuernagel maintain that J is wholly absent even in Joshua. So, while many are lowering the age of the documents, a critic like König carries up the date of E, which, with many, he puts before J, as far as the age of the Judges!

Or take the still more important example of

DEUTERONOMY.

How does the case stand with regard to unanimity here? Many put the origin of the book in the reign of Josiah, often in combination with a hypothesis of fraud. Others avoid this by carrying it back to the reign of Manasseh—a view to which, Kuenen says, there is "fatal" objection. Others go higher still, and place it hypothetically in the reign of Hezekiah. A minority, pointing to the absence of all traces of the divided kingdom, carry it up to a date much nearer Moses, and hold the kernel to be Mosaic.

On the other hand, a powerful current has set in towards disintegration. Dr. Driver ably defends the unity of the book; Kuenen upheld the unity of Chs. v.-xxvi.; Wellhausen, with many others, divided the hortatory and legislative parts, and took the original book to consist only of Chs. xii.-xxvi. Now, however, the book is handed over to the mercies of a Deuteronomic "school," and its disintegration proceeds apace. "The Code and its envelopments," says the Oxford *Hexateuch*, "homiletic and narrative, hortatory or retrospective, must thus be regarded as the product of a long course of literary activity to which the various members of a great religious

* The importance of this is that many alleged linguistic marks of E, *e.g.*, *Amah* for "maid-servant," are supported from this section.

school contributed" (II., p. 302). On this view the law-book of Josiah is reduced to Chs. xii.-xix. (p. 95).

Have we even yet attained to "assured results"? Not in the least. Within the last few years

STILL ANOTHER THEORY OF DEUTERONOMY

has appeared—that of Steuernagel—which cuts up all previous theories by the roots, and starts off on quite new lines. This scholar, whose views have already obtained influential support, thinks the critics all wrong in dividing the books into hortatory and legislative sections, and proposes a new division cross-ways, into sections marked by the use of the singular pronouns ("thou," &c.), and sections marked by the use of the plural ("ye," &c.). I do not believe that the new theory has any more solid foundation than the others, but it assuredly casts an interesting light on the claim to "settled" conclusions.

A glance must now be taken at the so-called

PRIESTLY CODE.

This is the key of the position of the Wellhausen theory, and here, if anywhere, the critics may be expected to hold together. But while there is naturally more semblance of agreement on the surface, arising from the marked peculiarities that distinguish the P source, there is found again keen difference on the matters which are most essential. One question is as to the extent of the source. It is found, *e.g.*, in Joshua? Most critics say yes; Wellhausen says no. He regards the "main stock" of the Priestly narrative as ceasing with the death of Moses, and denies the identity of the P hand in Joshua with that of the earlier books.

A more fundamental question is as to the *unity* of the source. Graf, the founder of the school, till his death declined to admit that the P sections ever existed as a

separate, independent work, and the disintegration of the writing which has been going on ever since (P^1, P^2, P^3, &c.) is a practical endorsement of his opinion. The so-called Priestly narrative, in fact, often a mere thread, is, especially after the hypothetical E has been cut out of it, a broken, unequal, fragmentary thing, which anyone looking at it might see could never have subsisted alone. Its interrelations with J and E are so close that it needs them, and they need it, throughout.*

The state of opinion about the Priestly Code as respects agreement is best seen by looking at that interesting section of it commonly spoken of as

THE LAW OF HOLINESS.

This is a portion of the law (Lev. xvi.-xxvi., mainly) which critics, with much plausibility, regard as having at one time formed a code or summary of Levitical law standing by itself. It is acknowledged also that the closest relation subsists between it and the Book of Ezekiel. What is that relation? Originally, it was confidently held that Ezekiel must be the author of the Code; most now, putting it later, explain the resemblances by the violent hypothesis of an "imitation" of Ezekiel; Dr. Driver and many others see clearly that it must have existed before Ezekiel and been used by him; other leading critics discern plain traces of its use in Deuteronomy; older scholars, like Dillmann, and some more recent, ascribe to it a very high antiquity. Such views, even that of its antecedence to Deuteronomy (this the more, the further we carry the date of that book back), are fatal to the theory of a post-exilian origin of the law.

* *E.g.*, P alone records the making of the Ark (Gen. vi.); J records Noah's sacrifice (Gen. viii. 20), but P alone tells of his going out of the Ark (vers. 15-19); the promise of Ishmael is given in J (Gen. xvi. 11), but P records his birth (vers. 16-17; P alone records the ages and deaths of the patriarchs, &c.

Here also disintegration is active (H^1, H^2, H^3, &c.), but the most curious feature is the tendency to enlarge the scope of this remarkable section of the law, once freedom is gained by making it post-exilian. First one part, then another, legal and historical, is given to it, till it assumes quite imposing proportions. A single quotation from the Oxford *Hexateuch* will illustrate this singular

PROCESS OF REPRISTINATION.

"Other scholars, again, like Wurster, Cornill, Wildeboer, further propose to include within it a considerable group of Levitical laws more or less cognate in subject and style. . . . Are all these passages to be regarded as relics of P^h? In that case it must have contained historical as well as legislative matter on an extensive scale. It must have related the commission to Moses, the death of the firstborn, the establishment of the Dwelling, and the dedication of the Levites to Yahweh's service. Even if the latter passages be denied to P^h, the implications of Ex. vi. 6-8 suggest that the document to which it belonged comprised an account of the exodus, the great religious institutions, and the settlement in the land promised to the fathers!" (I. p. 145).

Does criticism not seem here to be in the way of working out its own cure? Transpose this source, as I think we are compelled to do, from a post-exilian to a pre-Deuteronomic age, and have we not very much our old Pentateuch back again?

IV.

Readers may now judge whether, instead of "assured results," we ought not more properly to speak of "critical uncertainties." Before, however, touching on other points, it may be desirable again to attempt something in the way of positive construction. This can best be done by

taking up the question still held over. Assuming certain results to be "settled" in the critical schools, I would ask—

SHOULD THEY BE SETTLED?

This brings us back to the critical theories of J and E. The "dates" of these documents, according to Mr. Addis, are among the things of "capital moment" on which there is "agreement." We have seen how far this is from being the case, but let that pass. He puts the dates at "between 850 and 750." Even were these dates granted, it should be observed that we should still be a long way from the conclusion that the contents of the narratives are merely "legendary," as is too commonly assumed. The essential thing is not the date at which a narrative assumed its present literary form. A narrative may be late, and yet be based on much older and perfectly reliable materials. The older narratives of the Bible (patriarchal and Mosaic) have a character of naturalness and truth, a force and liveliness of representation, a suitability to the conditions of the age, a penetration by the Divine purpose, a coherence with the whole plan of God's revelation, which must for ever remain a bulwark against their resolution into late popular legends, casually brought together, and wrought into their present shape by some unknown writers well down in the monarchy!

But I now go further, and ask: What are the grounds for this relatively

LATE DATING OF J AND E?

The reader will be a clever man if he can discover them. It is sometimes argued that, since J and E are many centuries later than Moses, Deuteronomy must be later still, because it pre-supposes the history and legislation of the former works. But the argument, surely, may be as

effectively reversed: for, if Deuteronomy be an older—still more, as I believe, a substantially Mosaic—book, the immediate result is to throw back the J and E history and legislation, on which it is based, into actually Mosaic times. Why should these be put so much later? There is nothing I know of that necessitates or warrants so late a dating as the critics suggest, but much that speaks against it. Allowing the fullest weight to the casual indications on which the critics lay stress to show a post-Mosaic origin of Genesis, none of them points to a date beyond the early days of the Kingdom, and all may easily be due to later annotation.* There is no trace of allusion in the history to the divided kingdom. Gunkel, a sufficiently advanced critic, will not allow any allusion even to the reigns of Saul, or David, or Solomon.†

Wherein then lies the reason for this late dating of the critics, which constantly tends, with the development of their theories, to become later? For reason of some kind there surely must be. If the matter is probed to its bottom, apart from the influence on the judgment of a revolutionary theory of religion, I believe the explanation will be found to lie in certain

OBSCURE MIRRORINGS

of later events in the history of Israel which they think they discern in the simple patriarchal stories. *E.g.*, Jacob's vow at Bethel (Gen xxviii.) is intended to sanction the custom of paying tithes at the (calf-) shrine at Bethel; the Syrians wars are mirrored in the relations of Jacob and Laban (Gen. xxxi.); the story of the sin of Judah

* It is singular how jealous the critics are of allowing the supposition of editorial revision to anybody but themselves. They are the last persons who should object.

† On the above points, see my *Problem of the O.T.*, pp. 111-112, 371-4, &c.

(Gen. xxxviii.) is intended as an Ephraimite mockery of the Southern Kingdom, &c.* The dates must therefore be as late as these events. The reader may decide whether this is science, or a play of unbridled imagination. Gunkel rejects these mirrorings *in toto*.

I advance now a step further in the testing of these "settled results," and ask,

WHY SHOULD J AND E BE DISTINGUISHED

as two documents at all? This touches a crucial point. I have ventured to challenge the assertion that the priestly history and legislation ever existed as a separate document †; I now do the same about J and E. It is not difficult, indeed, to understand how E came originally to be separated from the Jehovistic and older Elohistic sections, viz., through its use of the name "God," and its contrast in style with the remaining Elohistic parts. But no reason was ever shown for setting it up as an independent document, nor do its character or contents favour such an idea of it. The truth is, these so-called E sections stand inseparably connected with the J narrative, are allowed to be all but indistinguishable from it in style, run parallel to it in content, and, generally, would never have been suspected of being part of another narrative, but for their peculiar use of the divine name. The fact of the distinction in the names of God remains, but it is neither uniform nor absolute‡, and when not due, as

* As the stories are supposed to be the reflections of contemporary events, there is no time for the rise of legends, and they must be regarded as the work of deliberate invention.

† P is most simply regarded as (in the critics' own words) "the framework" in which, in Genesis at least, the JE narratives are set. It is inseparable from them.

‡ "Elohim" sometimes occurs in Jehovistic sections (*e.g.*, Gen. iii. 1, 3, 5; xvi. 13; xxxii. 28-29), and "Jehovah" occasionally in Elohistic sections (*e.g.*, Genesis xx. 18; xxii. 11-14; xxviii. 17-21).

sometimes happens, to discriminative use, may be explained in other ways, possibly, as Klostermann thinks, by editorial revision, as in the Elohistic psalms.* It cannot, in any case outweigh the other strong marks of unity in the narrative.†

But is not this an imperfect statement? Are there not numerous marks of language, style, tone, mode of representation, by which the critics profess, irrespective of the divine names, to make a clear distinction between the assumed J and E writings? There are, and the value of them is seen in the fact that, where the clue of the divine name fails, discrimination is admitted to be hardly possible, and the greatest diversity obtains in the results secured. An example or two will illustrate the

ILLUSORY CHARACTER

of these supposed criteria better than any general statement. I take them from a recent popular book, Prof. J. E. McFadyen's *Introduction to the Old Testament.*

Mr. McFadyen writes in an easy, pleasing style, and the reader, if not careful, is apt to be carried away by the flow of his lucid sentences. But let him test the assertions. "The basis of it [the attempt at distinction] must, of course, be a study of the duplicate versions of the same incidents" (p. 13). The "of course" here takes it for granted as a thing about which there can be no dispute that the stories in question (*e.g.*, Abraham's denials of his wife, Hagar in the wilderness) *are* "duplicate versions of the same incidents." "That is," he proceeds, "such a

* Cf. Ps. liii. with Ps. xiv.; Ps. lxx. with Ps. xl. 13-17, where both versions are given. On Klostermann's views, see my *Problems of O.T.*, pp. 227-8, &c.

† Kuenen has himself uttered a warning "against laying an exaggerated stress on this one phenomenon," which, he says, has twice led criticism astray (*Hex.* p. 61).

narrative as Gen. xx., which uses the word God (Elohim), is compared with its parallel in xii. 10-20, which uses the word Jehovah [*once* in xii. 17, but once also in a similar connection in xx. 18], and in this way the distinctive features and interests of each document will readily be found." Then comes the proof. "The parallel suggested is easy and instructive, and it reveals the relative ethical and theological superiority of E to J [others reverse the relation]. J tells the story of Abraham's falsehood with a quaint naïveté (vii.). E is offended by it, and excuses it (xx.). The theological refinement of E is suggested not only here, xx. 3, 6, but elsewhere," &c.

Will the reader now take the trouble to

LOOK AT THESE CHAPTERS

for himself? He will discover, perhaps, to his surprise, that J's "quaint naïveté" does not prevent him from representing Pharaoh as denouncing Abraham's sin in the severest terms, after Jehovah had plagued the king with great plagues on account of it (Cf. Ch. xx. 17, 18), and as summarily banishing Abraham "and his wife, and all that he had," out of Egypt for his offence (Ch. xii. 17-20); while E, who has the "relative ethical and theological superiority," makes Abimelech load Abraham with presents, offer him the best of the land, and content himself with a mild rebuke to Sarah (Ch. xx, 14-16)! Would it not be as easy to argue that it was J who had the keener moral sense? The supposed "excuse" is Abraham's explanation that Sarah was his half-sister (ver. 12)—a plea the truth of which there is no reason to doubt. Ch. xx., indeed, represents it as a settled policy on Abraham's part that "at every place" whither they came, Sarah was to pass as his sister (ver. 13).

"Similarly," says Mr. McFadyen, "the expulsion of Hagar, which in J is due to Sarah's jealousy (xvi.), in E,

is attributed to a command of God (xxi. 8-21)." But the first instance is no "expulsion," but a voluntary "flight," and the two narratives are quite different. In the first (Ch. xvi.) Ishmael is not yet born, and the angel, in promising his birth, directs Hagar to return to her mistress (ver. 9). In the second (Ch. xxi.) Ishmael is grown up, and Abraham, deeply grieved, is directed to send Hagar away (ver. 12). Where is the difficulty? I have no doubt whatever that the two stories are distinct, and that both were found in the original tradition.

V.

This must suffice for the Pentateuchal "documents"; a few words may now be said on one or two other matters. In view of the very radical disagreements of eminent critics as to most parts of

THE PROPHETIC LITERATURE,

to which Mr. Peake, in his afore-mentioned lecture, bears frank witness (pp. 36-38), the less said as to "unanimity" about the dates and authorship of the prophetic books the better. There is much more reason for raising the question of the "should" in regard to these results. The whole treatment is a kind of whirligig; caution is thrown to the winds; subjective canons are freely employed in accepting or rejecting; one never gets to feel that his feet are firmly planted on anything. In the unbounded liberty of theorising, no mortal can predict what cat will jump out of the bag next. For two Isaiahs there are now no one knows how many (Duhm, Cheyne). Jeremiah is resolved into fragments, of which "only portions come from the prophet and his secretary." "The subject," says Mr. Addis, "is too complicated and disputable to be treated here in detail."* Parts even of Ezekiel are

* *Hebrew Religion*, p. xv.

brought down to the first century B.C. (Schmidt), and the prophecies against foreign nations are disputed (H. P. Smith). The minor prophets are subjected to drastic mutilation. Against these extreme conclusions other critics wisely protest. But this whole region of criticism is at present a seething sea of controversy, and is bound to remain so till more sober guiding principles are adopted.

The interest of the Christian Church in these discussions has always centred very naturally in

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH,

and the problems of that book, despite all that has been written on 1st and 2nd Isaiahs, are still far from being satisfactorily solved. I may be permitted to refer to a piece of personal experience which made a considerable impression on my own mind. In early life I studied with care what the late Dr. Samuel Davidson had to say on the subject of the unity of Isaiah in his *Introduction to the Old Testament* (second edition), of date 1857. He had already made considerable advance in his critical positions, but he still held to, and defended, Isaiah's authorship of the second part of the book. He gave Knobel's objections at length, and learnedly replied to them *seriatim*. He adduced counter-arguments in favour of the authenticity, including arguments drawn from diction, linguistic colouring, circle of ideas and images, &c. A little later I became acquainted with Dr. Davidson's larger *Introduction* (3 vols., 1862), and here met with a surprise. It was not simply that the author had in the interval become convinced of the exilian date of Is. xl.*ff*; that was conceivable. What *did* astonish me was that in these short five years all his judgments on the details of the arguments had undergone

A COMPLETE REVERSAL.

All the *pros* at a stroke had become *cons*; all the *cons*, *pros*. Diction, circle of ideas, linguistic peculiarities, had changed sides. Everything that was convincing before had become invalid; everything that was unconvincing before had become demonstrable. I felt instinctively that there was something deeper in this than mere change of literary judgment; that a new standpoint had been adopted which controlled the judgment. It was like what the late Prof. Romanes tells of Professor Clifford at Cambridge: "Clifford had only just moved at a bound from the extreme of asceticism to that of infidelity —an individual instance which I deem of particular interest in the present connection, as showing the dominating influence of a forcedly emotional character even on so powerful an intellectual one, for the rationality of the whole structure of Christian belief cannot have so reversed its poles within a few months." * The perception of this in Dr. Davidson determined me to be cautious in accepting critical conclusions *en bloc*, and I have never had reason to regret the resolve.

It is, I think,

A FAIR QUESTION

for criticism to raise—one, I mean, fairly arising out of the phenomena of the book—whether in certain of the later chapters the standpoint of the prophet is not actually; as most will admit it to be ideally, in the exile. But the course of criticism itself shows that it is a question not quite so easily settled as many suppose. Gesenius was for long thought, with good reason, to have established, with superabundance of learning, the unity of Is. xl.-lxvi., and his arguments constitute a strong bulwark still against the assailants of that unity. But was it exilic? Dr. Cheyne

* *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 137-8.

took an important step when, in 1880-2, he allowed that there were a considerable number of passages in 2 Isaiah which clearly had a Palestinian, some of them a pre-exilian, character, and could not be reconciled with an origin in the exile. It is now usual to assume for these portions a late *post*-exilian origin. But apart from unsuitability of contents, and that linguistic unity with other sections which Gesenius established, where is the evidence or probability of a prophet of the rank of Isaiah arising, say, in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah?

To such considerations fall to be added the linguistic and other relations with the first part of the book, on which the older defenders of the Isaianic authorship rightly insisted. It will not be surprising if by-and-by criticism declares itself again for the unity of the bulk of the book, with, perhaps, some editorial revision, introducing, *e.g.*, the name "Cyrus" into the two verses where it occurs.† Such a criticism might find support in the fact that a destruction of the city and temple and deportation to Babylon, were unquestionably looked for as near in the days of Micah and Isaiah (cf. Amos ii. 5; Mic. iii. 12; iv. 10; Is. vi. 11, 12; xxxix. 6, 7: always with hope of restoration, Is. xi. 11, &c.), though, as Jeremiah narrates (xxvi. 17-19), the fulfilment of the threatening was postponed, on account of the repentance of king and people.

* See his *Prophecies of Isaiah*, ii. pp. 211 *ff.*, and the Commentary on Is. lvi. 9, lvii., &c.

† It is noteworthy that already in the book of the Son of Sirach (c. 200 B.C.) the Isaianic authorship of the later prophecies is firmly assumed (Eccles. xlviii. 22-25). Isaiah had a school, or company, of disciples, to whom was entrusted the collection and preservation of his oracles (Is. viii. 16-17); to them probably are due any later oracles, if such are admitted in the book. The prophecies to whose fulfilment appeal is made in Is. xli. 22 *ff*; xliv. 25-28; xlv. 21, &c., are, most naturally, *these* very prophecies of the book, the fulfilment of which would then be seen.

V

Israel's God and Worship

Israel's God and Worship

DR. F. DELITZSCH has expressively described the Wellhausen theory by saying that its effect has been to "lift off its hinges the history of worship and literature in Israel as hitherto accepted."* What was at the top it shifts to the bottom. It is not, however, simple change of place that is in question. The new theory not only inverts the Bible's own account of Israel's history and institutions; it cancels that history in large part altogether, and proposes for acceptance another

WHOLLY RECONSTRUCTED

view of the development of religious ideas and laws among the Hebrews. Some points in this radically changed and avowedly revolutionary theory of religion have already been before us. It is now necessary to give it closer attention, in its contrast with the view presented in the Bible itself.

It has already been shown that the nerve of the new theory is the idea of natural evolution. The more believing scholars recognise the inadequacy of this principle to fit the facts, and, accepting the framework of the scheme, work into it the idea of "revelation" to explain the higher elements in the prophetic teaching. But the originators and leading expounders of the theory (Kuenen, Wellhausen, Duhm, Smend, Stade, Guthe, &c.) know

* Luthardt's *Zeitschrift*, 1880, p. 279.

nothing of any "revelation" other than is given in the development of the inherent powers of man's religious nature. As Kuenen states it in a typical passage: "So soon as we derive a separate part of Israel's religious life directly from God, and allow the supernatural or immediate revelation to intervene in even one single point, so long also our view of the whole continues to be incorrect. . . . . It is the supposition of

A NATURAL DEVELOPMENT

alone which accounts for all the phenomena."* Kuenen's own book on *The Religion of Israel* is constructed on this principle, and it is from this basis, whatever modifications more earnestly-minded men may introduce into it —and these leave much to be desired—that the theory as a whole is to be understood.

As recent popular expositions of this theory by writers who *do* in some degree accept the idea of "revelation" may be mentioned Mr. Addis's *Hebrew Religion to the Establishment of Judaism under Ezra*, already noticed, and Prof. Karl Marti's *Religion of the Old Testament.*† It was seen in an earlier paper how vigorously the foundations of this theory of religion, in its successive stages of "nomad or Bedouin," "agricultural" (settled life in Canaan), "prophetic," and "legal" religion, were assailed by H. Winckler in his Eisenach address. Winckler himself represents the not less extreme, but very opposite view, that the higher religious ideas in Israel's religion (its monotheism included) were largely an

INHERITANCE FROM BABYLONIA.

They came in, however, at the *beginning*, not at the *end*, of Israel's history. The reaction has done good service in that it has set critical writers on the task of very

* *Prophets and Prophecy*, p. 4.

† *Die Religion des A T unter den Religionen des vorderen Orients.*

vigorously defending the *uniqueness* and *originality* of Israel's religion, thereby strengthening the hold on the idea of revelation; while the Winckler school is not less effectually disposing of many of the false assumptions that underlie the Wellhausen scheme of the history and religion. I shall keep these instructive conflicts in view in the defence of the Biblical representation, which reaps its advantage from both.

I.

The way is now open for sketching, as briefly as I can, the outlines of this new theory of the religion of Israel.

It is important to notice at the outset how much at once drops out.

THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD—

e.g., in Mr. Addis's sketch, wholly disappears. Certain writers, as Dr. Driver, recognise a "kernel" of historical truth in the patriarchal narratives—how much, how little, is never clear; but the prevailing tendency is to resolve the whole into tribal legend, in which nothing remains but vague reminiscences of tribal movements, and ideas and events of later times, thrown back into the form of family history. How can it be otherwise, it is asked, where the narratives are perhaps a thousand years later than the traditions which they record and embellish? Of patriarchal religion in the Biblical sense, therefore, there can be no speech. What takes its place is a congeries of Semitic superstitions, inferred from analogy and stray hints in the narratives; belief in the haunting presence of ghosts and spirits: in the animation of natural objects, as stones, wells, trees; animal-worship, ancestor-worship, use of amulets and charms, &c. Prof. Kautzsch calls the pre-Mosaic religion "polydæmonism," and thinks that at this stage "God" can hardly be spoken of.

Of Israel itself, or the tribes of which it came to be composed, nothing up to this point is supposed to be positively known. The nomadic life led some of these tribes into Egypt, and there they fell into bondage. The history of Israel as a nation begins with

THE MOSAIC AGE.

It is a moot question, as already seen, how far Moses is to be recognised as a real personage at all. Writers like Cheyne and Meyer deny his historical existence, but most allow him a more or less shadowy reality and activity. Those who go farthest regard him as the leader who, in the name of Yahweh (Jehovah) first gathered the tribes into a unity, led them out of Egypt and across the Red Sea, then pledged them at Sinai to some kind of covenant with Yahweh. *How* the Israelites got out of Egypt, escaped pursuit, and effected the crossing of the Sea, ascribed to a happy "coincidence," is got over by phrases, but is not satisfactorily explained. Who "Yahweh" was—a god of the Kenites, a new god to the Israelites, possibly a god known earlier in some of the tribes—is again a moot question. Kuenen identifies Yahweh with Moloch. A favourite view is that he was the storm-god of Sinai. In any case, he became henceforth the god of Israel. He was in no sense the *sole* god, nor was thought of as such by his worshippers. He was one amongst many, the god of this particular people—

"A TRIBAL GOD,"

like Chemosh of Moab. So also he continued to be till the days of the prophets.

It does not follow that, though the personality of Moses is allowed, the history given of him in the Pentateuchal books is accepted. The opposite is the case. The law-

giver's personality and work are enveloped in the folds of late legend, through the mists of which we can make out little that is certain regarding him. The one thing sure is that most of the things we are told about him did *not* happen. The narratives in Exodus, Kuenen informs us, are "utterly unhistorical." * He may have laid the foundations of law by his oral decisions (Ex. xviii.), but he certainly did not receive, or write, or convey to Israel, any of the Codes of law connected with his name. His connection with legislation is a late tradition. He did not give the Decalogue, for there was no thought at that stage of forbidding worship by images. Yahweh remained the god of the tribes, but what is told of the mode of his worship is mostly

POST-EXILIAN FICTION.

There may, *e.g.*, have been an ark, but it was probably originally only a fetish-chest, containing perhaps a couple of meteoric stones. There may have been a rude tent to cover it, but assuredly not the "tabernacle" described in Exodus. Aaronic priesthood, sacrifices, prescribed feasts, &c.; nothing of that kind then existed, or was conceived of.

A new stage commences with the experience of

SETTLED LIFE IN CANAAN.

The nomadic life is ended; the people have now entered on an agricultural and city life as settlers in a land which had long enjoyed a high degree of civilisation. Their new surroundings speedily tell on the form of their religion. Yahweh begins to show his superiority to the gods of the Canaanites (Baalim), according to Budde, by "absorbing them into himself," and much of *their* worship now becomes *his*. The Canaanite sanctuaries are

* *Hexateuch*, p 42

appropriated and converted by legend into holy places of the patriarchs. There is as yet no law against high places or graven images—not, therefore, even the law of Ex. xx-xxiii.—and Yahweh is lawfully served under every green tree. The tribes were for long a disorganised throng, weak, oppressed by surrounding peoples, without a sense of unity. The pictures of alternate oppression and deliverance after repentance in the Book of Judges are quite unhistorical. Yahweh himself is conceived of as a limited, passionate, vengeful being, arbitrary and cruel in his commands and actions; a god of battles, not yet clothed with any high ethical qualities. The Israelites are still, in short, little better than a barbarous horde.

With Samuel we reach the

TRANSITION TO THE MONARCHY,

and somewhat higher ideas begin to prevail. The picture of Samuel, however, and after him of David, given in the history, is not according to fact. The theocratic drapery with which both characters are invested must be stripped off.* The true Samuel was originally a village "seer," selling his oracles for reward, and the prophetic bands that took their origin from him were companies of frenzied enthusiasts, whom the common people were disposed to look on as "madmen" (Cf. 2 Kings ix. 11). The saying, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" is not to be understood (so some) as an expression of reverence, but rather as one of regret that so hopeful a youth should have fallen into such disreputable company! Wellhausen can hardly find words strong enough to express his idea of the low state of prophetic orders before Elijah. David,

*"The mere recapitulation of the contents of this narrative," says Wellhausen, of 1 Sam. vii., "makes us feel at once what a pious make-up it is, and how full of inherent impossibility."—*Hist. of Israel*, p. 228.

Samuel's *protégé*, was no doubt a great warrior and a powerful king, a poet, too, and fond of music of a kind, but in no way the saint and psalmist that later tradition makes him. "More easily," says Prof. Cheyne, "could Carl the Great have written St. Bernard's hymn than the David of the Books of Samuel, the fifty-first Psalm."* Yahweh, to him, was still a local deity.

The chief thing to be noticed in

THE INTERVENING PERIOD

till the rise of prophecy is the inversion in the new theory of all customary (*i.e.*, Biblical) judgments on men and events. Solomon's temple had not the religious significance ascribed to it in the history, but was a private undertaking of the king, of a piece with his other schemes of aggrandisement, and entirely under royal control. Jeroboam's was a justifiable rebellion, and his setting up of the calves for worship at Bethel and Dan (1 Kings xii. 28-29) was but a revival of the old time-honoured worship of Yahweh in Israel under the form of an ox. Ahab is rehabilitated as, in Mr. Addis's judgment, "with all his faults, a brave and able king," to whom much injustice is done in the history.† Even Elijah, who, though he opposed the building of a temple to Baal, is held to have had no protest to make against the golden calves ["nor, again, do we hear that he made any protest against the prevalent worship of Jehovah under the

**Aids to the Devout Study of Criticism*, p. 28.

†*Heb. Rel.*, p. 123. He further writes:—"We are not to suppose that Ahab ever dreamed of renouncing his allegiance to Jehovah: much less did he tempt his subjects to do so. . . . Nor is it credible that Jezebel, his queen, seriously set herself to exterminate Jehovah's prophets, and all but succeeded in her task. . . He had concluded an alliance with Tyre . . . so he took it to be a natural thing that a temple of the Phœnician god should be erected in Samaria (pp. 130-1).

form of an ox"],* is not allowed by Mr. Addis to be a monotheist (Wellhausen disagrees with him here). Worship on high places, and the use of images were, of course, perfectly legitimate. Kuenen goes further, and carries over most of the abominations practised by the heathen, and sternly condemned by the prophets, into the worship of Yahweh.†

II.

Thus things remained till

THE AGE OF THE PROPHETS,

commencing with Amos, when, as the result of the enlarged conceptions wrought by the Assyrian invasions, a revolution took place in the more spiritual minds in regard to Yahweh and his worship. By a sudden advance in ideas Yahweh is apprehended as the one sole God and ruler of the world; His character and government are righteous; ritual is condemned as displeasing to Him, and His true service is seen to consist in doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God (Mic. vi. 8). Inward purity of heart is set before ceremonial cleanness; the folly of idolatry is perceived, and strenuous efforts are made to effect its overthrow. In all this the prophets were at war with traditional usage as well as with prevailing practice; it was something new they were introducing.‡ They were not endowed with the power of prediction, in the sense of supernatural foresight,

*p. 131. Still less do we hear that Elijah *approved* of the calf-worship. Is not condemnation implied in 1 Kings xxi. 21-24?

†*Rel. of Israel* i. p. 72.

‡Certain critics do not make the transition quite so abrupt, and recognise ethical elements in the conception of Yahweh, which prepared the way for the prophetic teaching. Still, "monotheism" begins with the prophets.

but they gave bold, often shrewd, forecasts of the future, based on their reading of the times, which sometimes were fulfilled, and oftener were not. Their teaching and unflinching conflict and testimony for the truths of an exalted "ethical monotheism" mark the highest point in Old Testament religion.

As the ideas of the prophets gained strength, attempts were from time to time made to translate them into practice. The best known and most remarkable of these efforts was

THE REFORMATION OF JOSIAH

occasioned by the discovery of the Book of Deuteronomy (or some earlier form of it) in the temple, as narrated in 2 Kings xxii. This book, which embodies older laws, was composed with the express design of bringing about a centralisation of worship in Jerusalem, and putting an end to the (hitherto lawful) worship of Yahweh and other Gods at the high places.* It was hidden in the temple, then produced by Hilkiah, and presented to Josiah, on whose mind it made an extraordinary impression. The book was accepted as the authentic law of Moses (2 Kings xxiii. 24, 25), and on the basis of it a new covenant was entered into between the King, people, and Yahweh (xxiv. 1-3). The effects were Josiah's vigorous crusade against the high places in Southern and Northern Israel, and suppression of their worship, the cleansing of city and temple from idolatry, and, when all was finished, the observance of a great passover (Ch. xxiii.). The enthusiasm was short-lived, and the writings of later prophets show that, after Josiah's death, the old evils were soon all in full force again.

*The laws in Deut. xviii., &c., for the "Levites" are supposed to be a provision made for the "disestablished priests" of these high places.

The nation from this point rapidly drifted to its ruin. The Northern Kingdom had been extinguished in 721 B.C. by the Assyrians; now came the final overthrow of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar (586 B.C.) and the carrying away of the people into

CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON.

The temple was burned, the ark destroyed, the ritual suspended; the people were torn away from their native soil. Here came the opportunity of the priests. Let them gather up in written form for preservation what could be recalled of the old cultus, and draw up a new programme of ceremonial observance for the future, in case the way should be opened for them to return. So many hands set to work. Ezekiel led the way in his sketch of the temple and its ordinances in a restored land (Ch. xl.-xlviii.). His sketch was not accepted, but one feature in it proved to be of decisive importance. In Ch. xliv. of his book he had denounced the priesthood for permitting the service of uncircumcised strangers in the sanctuary (really, it is held, the ordinary custom since Solomon's time), and had pronounced sentence of "degradation" on the unfaithful priests, assigning to them this lower rank of service, while the priesthood proper was reserved for the faithful "sons of *Z*adok." Here, it is claimed, is the clear explanation of

THE ORDER OF "LEVITES"

in the sanctuary in post-exilian times. They are none other than these "degraded priests"; therefore not of older date than Ezekiel. Busy brains and pens carried forward the task of the collection of old laws, the concoction of new ones, and the working up of the whole into a grand "Code," represented as having been given by Moses in the wilderness, but really, in greater part,

the fruit of their own invention. Thus arose the fabric of the so-called Levitical Law. A history was made to suit, and the finished product was brought from Babylon by Ezra, when he came to Jerusalem in 458 B.C., some seventy-eight years after the return. Fourteen years later (444 B.C.) it was read—or if, as Wellhausen thinks, it was by this time joined to the older JE histories, and to Deuteronomy, the whole Pentateuch was read to, and accepted by, the people as "the law of Moses" (Neh. viii).

Thus

POST-EXILIAN JUDAISM

was founded, and the development of the religion was completed. The temple had been already re-built by Zerubbabel, and everything was ready for organisation on the new lines. The Psalter is the "hymn-book" of this second temple, and is mostly, if not wholly, the product of post-exilian times. Many of the other books in the Bible, as Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Joel, of course Chronicles, are also post-exilian, and the process of addition went on till possibly the century before Christ. Daniel is a book written to comfort the pious in the persecutions of the Maccabean time.

III.

Thus I have sketched, I think not unfairly, for I wish to give it full justice, the theory of religion as it is ordinarily presented by writers of the Wellhausen persuasion. There are naturally shadings of the picture, sometimes in a more extreme, sometimes in a more cautious direction, but the main outlines are, beyond a question, those which I have indicated.

What have I now to oppose to it? I answer in a word, I simply oppose to it

THE WHOLE LITERATURE OF THE BIBLE.

The whole theory is, as I regard it, an inversion of the facts—the attempt to make a pyramid stand upon its apex, instead of on its base. And this, I think, it is not really difficult to prove.

Let us revert again to the commencement. One speaks sometimes of the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out. But that, surely, would be a small matter compared with the religion and history of Israel with

THE PATRIARCHS

left out. What is the main thing in the pre-Mosaic religion of Israel, if not the call of Abraham, and those covenants with, and promises to, the fathers, on which the whole after development rests? Is this merely legend? The whole character of the tradition speaks against the idea, not to refer to the minute corroborations which archæological research has latterly been furnishing of the fidelity of its contents.*

But let us take the later history, where it may be thought that the foundations are surer. The Book of Deuteronomy continually assumes the earlier history, and the Abrahamic covenant as the core of it (Deut. i. 8; vi. 10, &c.). The so-called JE history also, allowed to go back in one of its forms, at least, to the ninth or tenth century, has the full record of these things. The clear, consentient narratives of the Exodus embodied in that history have as their indubitable postulate that the God who appeared to Moses, and wrought the salvation of the people, was the God of "the fathers" (Ex. iii. 6 ff). Who were these "fathers"? None but the patriarchs of the Book of Genesis. Probe the national consciousness of Israel at what stage we may, this thought of the "fathers" is found fundamental to it. Yet all this

*These will be referred to again.

is dismissed as if the ignoring of it did not merit even a word of explanation!

What, next, is the proof of the picture of

PRE-MOSAIC RELIGION

which is substituted for the Biblical? It would not in itself be strange if, with the early Hebrews, as among ourselves, traces of popular superstitions were found mingling with the higher elements in their religion. But how scant and precarious is the evidence which the critics can adduce even for this assumption? It consists chiefly of sporadic intimations in the narrative on which an interpretation is forced in no way natural or necessary, and often positively inadmissible. Is it stone worship? Jacob set up and consecrated a pillar as a memorial of his vision, and called the stone (or as it is in a neighbouring verse, "the place") Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 11-22). This is interpreted to mean that Jacob anointed the stone "in homage to the indwelling deity"—"unction being in the East an act of courtesy to a guest, was fitly offered to the spirit in the stone which the worshipper desired to conciliate" (Addis, p. 26). Where in the Book of Genesis are the faintest hints justifying such an interpretation? Is it sacred trees? The patriarchs planted trees, and sat under the shade of them. Abraham lived at "the oaks of Mamre." Does this justify the belief that a spirit was supposed to be dwelling in these trees? What if certain trees in Canaan had names (Gen. xii. 6; Judges ix. 37) which *might* imply such superstitions. Did the patriarchs, with their higher enlightenment, share in these? So the patriarchs dug "wells," and there was a place called "Beersheba," "the well of the oath." Does the fact that "Beersheba was a favourite place of pilgrimage even for subjects of the northern kingdom" in the time of Amos (Amos v. 5; viii. 14) justify the

inference that "evidently it was a sacred well"? (Addis, p. 31). Or is this worship of wells proved by the old snatch of Hebrew song in Num. xxi. 17, 18: "Rise up, O well; sing ye to it"? Mr. Addis wisely discards "totemism," or worship of animals from which the worshipper claimed descent (p. 32); but he has a clinging to the idea of "sacred animals," of which a proof is seen in "the stone of Zoheleth ('serpent-stone,' probably a place-name, like hundreds among ourselves, without the slightest connection with serpent-*worship*), which is by En-rogel" (1 Kings i. 9). The proof of "worship of the dead," which is a favourite hypothesis, rests on no better foundation. What are we to say of the proof drawn from the pillar set up by Jacob at Rachel's grave (Gen. xxxv. 20)? That consultation of the dead was prohibited by the law (Deut. xviii. 11; Lev. xix. 31) is surely a poor evidence that it was part of the recognised religion?

IV.

Where, as a next branch of the case, is the proof to be found that Jehovah, the God of the Israelites, was, till the time of the prophets, only a "tribal" God? Not in the Bible's own representations, where, from the time of Abraham down, the only recognised conception of God is

A MONOTHEISTIC ONE.*

The Book of Genesis is, as every fair mind must acknowledge, from its first page to its last, a monotheistic book. If traces of a worship of "teraphim" are found in Laban's family, Jacob put the images away from his household, as incompatible with the worship of the

*[New support to this view is found in the recently-published book of Prof. Baentsch, of Jena, on "Israelitish Monotheism."]

one true God (Gen. xxxv. 2, 4). "The theological presuppositions of different parts of the book vary widely; centuries of religious thought, for example, must lie between the God who partakes of the hospitality of Abraham under a tree (xviii.) and the majestic, transcendent, invisible Being at whose word the worlds are born." So writes Mr. McFadyen.* On Mr. McFadyen's own showing of dates, very many centuries did *not* lie between the two narratives,† and I believe that Gen. i. is far older than he supposes. But, whatever the anthropomorphisms of the so-called J (and God is not immediately to be identified with His theophanies), it is admitted by even so radical a critic as Prof. H. P. Smith, that, in Genesis, they are brought "into harmony with the strictest monotheism."‡ It is possible to produce from "J" passages on God as exalted as anything in the Bible (*e.g.*, Ex. xxxiii. 18, 19).

In Exodus and the other books Jehovah is viewed as the

"GOD OF ALL THE EARTH,"

who, of His free grace and love, has chosen Israel to be His peculiar people (Gen. xix. 5). It is no doubt the case that many in Israel failed to rise to the height of this great conception; so that, even if Jephthah spoke in terms which implied an inadequate conception of Jehovah's relation to Chemosh (Judg. ix. 24), the fact would mean but little. Most probably, however, his language is only a form of accommodation to the standpoint of the king of Ammon (parallels in abundance may be found in missionary literature). The other passage commonly cited, viz., David's being driven out to "serve

**Old Test. Introd.* p. 8.

†Wellhausen makes the stories about Abraham the very *latest* creations of Israelitish imagination.

‡*O. T. Hist.* p. 16.

other gods" (1 Sam. xxvi. 19) is strangely misunderstood when taken to mean that outside of Canaan "the worship of Jehovah became an impossibility; he had perforce to 'serve other gods' in the land of his exile" (Addis, p. 79). Does any sane mind believe that, outside of Palestine—in Moab, for example—David did serve other gods than Jehovah? Or where is a single instance of the kind to be found? * No, Jehovah, in the minds of His true worshippers, was believed in as the one true God, universal Lord and Ruler in providence, from the first, and the prophets, when they came on the scene, never dreamed that they were bringing in any new doctrine, but preached loyalty and obedience to

THE SAME JEHOVAH

as their fathers had known since the day He made His covenant with them at Horeb.†

The proof that, till prophetic times, image-worship was a legitimate part of Israel's religion, equally breaks down. The form which this proof usually takes is, indeed, a choice example of the methods of the theory. We point, *e.g.*, to the fact that

IMAGES ARE UNKNOWN

in the legitimate worship of God in Genesis. The answer is that this is late and untrustworthy legend. We point as a cardinal evidence to the prohibition of images in the second commandment. We are told that the second commandment is not from Moses. We ask for a reason. We are told it cannot be, for the worship

*The same expression occurs in the monotheistic Book of Deuteronomy (xxviii. 36-64).

†In these contentions we have in the main Winckler with us. It is incredible that ideas so elevated should take their rise in the sudden manner supposed.

of images was common in Mosaic times, and long after. We inquire where is the proof of this. We are told that Yahweh was worshipped from early times in the form of an ox. We press again for evidence. We are pointed to Jeroboam's two calves. But how do these prove it? Because Jeroboam cannot be supposed to be introducing a new form of worship, and there are traces in the story of Micah in Judges that of old an idolatrous worship was set up in Dan (Judg. xviii. 30, 31). We urge the facts that this was evidently a schismatic worship (v. 31), that there is no trace of images in the lawful service of Jehovah, that there was no image in the temple at Jerusalem, and that Jeroboam's action is consistently denounced as "sin." All avails nothing, and Gideon's "ephod," and even the brazen serpent of Moses, are pressed into the proof that Jehovah was worshipped, forsooth, in the form of an ox.

The argument carries us next to Josiah's reformation. That Deuteronomy produced a strong impression in Josiah's mind, and led to his reforms, is evident from the history. But I maintain that nearly every other point in the critical case rests on

ASSUMPTION AND FALLACY.

The hypothesis of "pious fraud," which many advocate, is repugnant to every right-thinking mind. If we turn to the narrative in 2 Kings, we find that the book discovered in the temple was accepted by all classes as a genuine Mosaic work. It violently interfered (on the hypothesis) with powerful existing interests, yet no one, then or after, ventured to question it. If we consult the book itself, we find that it claims to be from Moses (Deut. xxxi. 9).

It is a fair literary question how far the book, in its present form, shows signs of later date in the repro-

duction, editing, and annotation,* of those last addresses which Moses is related to have written, and delivered to the priests. But there cannot be a shadow of a doubt that the book claims to be substantially

A WORK OF MOSES.

It embodies old laws which were long obsolete in the age of Josiah, and which a writer in that age could have no object in introducing. It is alleged to have been written to further the abolition of high places, and promote centralisation of worship; but high places are never mentioned in it. The assertion that its provisions for Levites are intended for "the disestablished priests" of the high places is without a trace of support in the text. As shown before, a central sanctuary was the ideal of worship in Israel from the beginning, and Deuteronomy does no more than hold up this as an ideal to be realised when the people should be settled, and have rest from their enemies round about (Ch. xii. 10). On the fluctuating critical theories of the book I have already written.

V.

We are thus brought, finally, to the Exile, on which it is not necessary to add much to what has been adduced in previous papers. When, from flights of theory, one descends to cold facts, it is amazing how unreal

THE POST-EXILIAN HYPOTHESIS

of the origin of the law discovers itself to be. It has no foothold in any one genuine fact in the history. Ezekiel's "degradation" of the non-Zadokite priests (which there is no reason to suppose was ever carried out), in no way

*Everyone admits this of the last chapter, and there are other parts of the book which indicate it not less clearly.

contradicts, but rather presupposes, the older (broken) law assigning the charge of the sanctuary to the Levites. The supposed activity of priests and scribes in collating and manufacturing laws, and stamping on them a fictitious Mosaic character, the "vehement struggles" of the degraded priests to regain their lost privileges (mirrored in the story of Korah), the compilation of the laws into a system and construction of a Pentateuch by, say, Ezra, are bold efforts of imagination which utterly lack historical attestation. What we do find is that, when the exiles returned from Babylon, nearly a century before Ezra produced his law, Levites, with their genealogies, were present in considerable force (Ezra ii.). The narrative in Neh. viii. gives no hint that the law which Ezra read was new; the whole account plainly proceeds on the assumption that it was old. The entire congregation, with priests and Levites, accepted it with unquestioning faith as "the law of Moses."

The objections to this view of

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE LAW

are chiefly two—its alleged irreconcilability with the simpler provisions in Deuteronomy, and the supposed silence of the previous history as to its peculiar regulations. In the law, *e.g.*, it is said, we have "priests and Levites," but in Deuteronomy only "Levites," any of whom may be priests. But it is precisely this latter assertion I would contest. The difference is explained largely by the different scope of the two writings. In Deuteronomy Moses is addressing the congregation, years after the tribe of Levi had been chosen, and when the functions of its several members were well known. His language, therefore, has regard, prevailingly, to the tribe as a whole. The Levitical laws, on the other hand, have specially to do with the duties of the priests, and

only incidentally with those of the Levites. Indeed, in the whole book of Leviticus, the Levites, with the solitary exception of Ch. xxv. 32, 33, are not so much as named. The expression "priests and Levites" is not found in any part of the Levitical code, any more than in Deuteronomy.

The objection from silence is one to which, for a reason given in a previous paper, namely, the wilderness form into which all parts of the law are cast, too much importance should not be given. But it would be easy to show that the "silence" has been much exaggerated. There are numerous

TRACES OF LEVITICAL LAWS

in Deuteronomy itself, and, as before shown, the main provisions are found in the so-called "Law of Holiness," which critics like Dr. Driver admit to be in substance pre-exilian. Dr. Driver allows that "the main stock" of the Levitical law was in operation before the exile. This gives up the case in principle, for, if the "main stock" is compatible with silence in the history, much else may be. Prophetic denunciations of a religion of mere ritual prove nothing against the Divine origin of the ritual, or against its proper use, which the prophets themselves in many ways recognise. On the other hand, prophetic books and historical books alike conclusively attest how a large part of the Levitical law was already in operation. Such a passage as Is. i. 13, 14, *e.g.*, is saturated with Levitical vocabulary ("new moons," "assembly," [convocation], "solemn meeting," "appointed feasts," &c.). In the historical books, besides allusions to ark, tabernacle, Aaronic priesthood, high priest, ephod, shew-bread, we have evidence of knowledge of festivals, of burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, meal-offerings, drink-offerings, probably sin-offerings as well,

of ritual of worship, of laws of purity, of clean and unclean food, of leprosy, of consanguinity, &c. Even if it were granted that some final codification or resetting of these laws was accomplished by Ezra, it would not militate one whit against their antiquity and substantially Mosaic character.

The post-exilian period is chiefly interesting because of the determined efforts of the critics to carry down into it

and a considerable part of the other literature of the Old Testament. The attempt is favoured by our almost absolute ignorance of the actual history and religious conditions of the period in question. There is here a vacuum which can be filled up at pleasure. But assertion is not proof, and when we ask, for instance, for evidence that the bulk, if not the whole, of the Psalter is post-exilian in origin, and especially that none of it can go back to David, we are surprised to find how largely theory and unwarrantable speculation take the place of proof. We are told, so far rightly, that the titles of the psalms are not to be depended on ; that David—*i.e.*, the *reconstructed* David of the critics—could not have written psalms ; that the religious ideas of the psalms are far beyond David's age, &c. The theory of religion above criticised is, in fact, brought in to determine what could, or could not, be. It used to be held as beyond question that at least the 18th Psalm belonged to David. But even this psalm would prove too much, and must go the way of the rest.

Yet it seems to me nearly as certain as anything can be that a collection of psalms, called from its major part "The Psalms of David" (as other collections were called later, "Of the Sons of Korah," &c.), was in existence before the exile ; and the uniform tradition, ascribing

psalms to David, is not a fact to be easily got over. Certain groups of psalms—those, *e.g.*, making mention of "the King"—cannot, without extreme forcing, be regarded as other than pre-exilian (Ps. ii., xviii., xx., xxi., &c.). We have express reference to the praises of the first temple—"Our holy and beautiful house where our fathers praised Thee" (Is. lxiv. 11),—and the captives in Zion were tauntingly asked by their enemies to sing to them "the songs of Zion" (Ps. cxxxvii. 3, 4). "Singers" were a prominent feature in the organisation of the temple at the return (Ezra ii. 41, 65; vii. 7, 24, &c.); and this organisation of sanctuary worship is connected again in Chronicles with David (1 Chron. xxiii. 5; xxv. 5, &c.). There are even passages which look like quotations of earlier and later psalms, as of Ps. i. in Jer. xvii. 8 (Cf. Ez. xlvii. 12), and the formula of thanksgiving in Jer. xxxiii. 11: "Give thanks to Jehovah of hosts, for Jehovah is good: for his mercy endureth for ever" (found only in Books iv. and v. of the Psalter). Few of the psalms show any trace of the Levitical influences which the critics make dominant after the exile.

We may, I think, on a survey of the whole, keep our minds at ease as to the effect upon our Bible of this modern critical theory of Israel's religion.

VI

Archæology as Searchlight

Archæology as Searchlight

SIXTY years ago comparatively few materials existed, outside the Bible itself, for testing the correctness of the statements of that book regarding the peoples, countries, and civilisations, with which its pages, in so many different ways, bring us into contact. What information about ancient countries was derived from outside sources—as, *e.g.*, from the Greek historian Herodotus—was late, confused, contradictory, and in many respects untrustworthy. It nearly as often contradicted the Bible as confirmed it, and, of course, was freely used by unbelievers to discredit the authority of the Bible. By a singular providence of God, the state of things is very different now. Sixty years ago we were in the dark; now we are comparatively in

A BLAZE OF LIGHT.

As if by magic, Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, other ancient lands, have yielded up their secrets; their graves have opened, and from their buried palaces, their monuments, their long-lost libraries, a voice has gone up rebuking the scorner, and bearing a testimony, as emphatic as it was unlooked for, to the credibility of Holy Writ.

It is a very severe test to which the Bible is exposed by

these discoveries of modern archæology. From the character of its history—going back as it does to primitive times, and touching in succession all the great Empires and phases of civilisation in the East—not only introducing us to, but minutely interlacing its narratives with, details of events and personages of such countries as Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Mesopotamia, as well as of lesser kingdoms in the immediate neighbourhood of Palestine—doing this at different periods, while the historical relations of these countries were themselves constantly changing—the Bible abounds in a mass of historical, geographical, and political references, which lay it open, perhaps to a greater extent than any other book that ever was written, to be confirmed or refuted by information drawn from external sources.

What makes the test more searching is the rapid way in which the memory of even the greater events in history tends to

SINK INTO OBLIVION.

It is, indeed, surprising how early the knowledge of vast cities, now again made familiar to us by the spade of the explorer, had faded from the minds of men. Nineveh fell in 606 B.C. under the combined attacks of Medes and Babylonians. Yet three centuries later, so completely had the traces of the city vanished, that Alexander the Great led his troops past the spot, as Xenophon had done before him, apparently without suspicion of its existence. The deserted mounds remained undisturbed till the middle of last century, when Botta, Layard, George Smith, and other excavators, laid their treasures bare. Research has unceasingly proceeded since, and it is with the results of these investigations that the Bible is put in comparison. What other book could stand so trying an ordeal?

Archæology as Searchlight

I.

I shall not attempt in this brief paper to sketch the history of modern exploration,* but shall confine myself to the

LARGER ASPECTS

of the subject, in which, it may be felt, the confirmation of the statements of the Bible is most effectively exhibited.

Let us look, first, at the groupings, on the large scale, of the

PEOPLES AND COUNTRIES

of those ancient times, as these are revealed to us by exploration and the Bible. Here the corroborations are extremely striking. The Bible, for instance, pictures all the streams in the distribution of mankind after the flood as proceeding from Babylonia as a centre (Gen. xi.). Discovery shows that probably all the great civilisations—Assyrian, Egyptian, Canaanitish, even Chinese—took their origin from this quarter. It goes further, and throws a flood of light on the ancient civilisations themselves. The old idea, derived from classical writers, was that Nineveh was older than Babylon, that Babylonian civilisation was derived from Assyria, and that both Babylonians and Assyrians were Semites. Now, it is ascertained, as the Bible tells us in Gen. x. 8, that civilisation in Babylonia goes far back beyond every other, that Assyria was colonised from Babylonia, and that the founders of Babylonian culture—of its letters, laws, institutions—were not Semitic, but a people of different, as we say, Hamitic stock. The very names of the cities in Gen. x. 10—Erech, Accad, Calneh

*A sketch of the leading facts may be seen in Chapter XI. of my *Problem of the Old Testament*.

(Nippur), &c.—carry us back into the midst of the Babylonia unearthed by exploration.

As specific examples, I may take first the case of

ELAM.

The Elam known to history is an Aryan, not a Semitic people, while Gen. x. 22 describes Elam as the eldest son of Shem. Here, apparently, was a mistake. But the French explorers, in their excavations at Susa, came the other year on an older stratum of civilisation, which proved to be Semitic. Dr. Peters, in a recent article,* sums up the results thus: "The French excavations both justify and explain the name. As soon as the Semites had established themselves thoroughly in Babylonia, they spread out into the neighbouring plain of Elam, and from the time of the Sargonids, with, or a little before, when the Semitic primacy was established, Elam constituted a part of what one may call the Babylonian Semitic Empire. Next these Babylonian Semites moved northward, and took or built Asshur, that is, Assyria, which is in the same list called in consequence the second son of Shem."

Another well-known case, hardly needing to be dwelt on, is that of

THE HITTITES.

This great people, described as stretching "from the wilderness, and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Josh. i. 4), is frequently referred to in Scripture (*e.g.*, Judg. i. 26; 1 Kings x. 28, 29; 2 Kings vii, 6). Yet history, outside the Bible, knew nothing of them, and their existence was scouted as mythical. Now, discovery has restored them to view,

*Art. on "The Eldest Son of Shem," in *The Homiletic Review*, October, 1906.

shown them to be a power hardly less great than Egypt and Assyria themselves, and made known to us their peculiar hieroglyphics, which scholars are yet vainly trying to decipher.

Is it by coincidence, I ask, that this wonderful knowledge of peoples and their relations, stretching back, in some cases, millenniums before Abraham, is preserved in Genesis, the oldest parts of which the critics suppose to have taken shape in the ninth or eighth century? Must not older, authentic records be assumed?

I look next at the nature of

THE OLD TRADITIONS

of these ancient peoples, as now made known to us by oriental discovery. If there is any place where one might look with hope for the most ancient traditions of the world, it is in Babylonia. In Babylonia the Bible locates the creation of man, the garden in which he was placed, the building of the ark, the new distribution of the race, &c.

Where, then, should the traditions of the oldest things linger, if not in this region? Now, however, as everyone knows, the traditions of these ancient peoples recovered from their own monuments, on such subjects as the Creation, possibly the Temptation (the interpretation is disputed), the Sabbath,* the Flood, &c., are in our possession, and, though debased by polytheism, and lacking the high spiritual ideas of the Old Testament, their singular resemblance to the Biblical accounts is universally admitted. A few lines from the Flood story will illustrate:—

*It is a disputed question whether the Babylonian Sabbath was a day of *general* rest. Winckler favours the view that the original idea included rest.

"On the mountain of Nizir the ship grounded:
One day and a second day did the mountain of Nizir hold it.
A third day and a fourth day did the mountain of Nizir hold it.
A fifth day and a sixth day did the mountain of Nizir hold it.
When the seventh day came I sent forth a dove, and let it go.
The dove went and returned; a resting-place it found not, and it turned back.
I sent forth a swallow and let it go: the swallow went and returned;
A resting-place it found not, and it turned back.
I sent forth a raven and let it go.
The raven went and saw the going down of the waters, and
It approached, it waded, it croaked, and did not turn back."

Here the chief differences are a "ship" for an "ark," and the interpolation of "the swallow."

The easy explanation which most critics adopted of these resemblances was that the Jews had borrowed their legends from the Babylonians. The Wellhausen School usually put the borrowing late in the history of Israel, much of it in the Exile; the favourite view at present is that the Israelites came into possession of the legends through the Canaanites, who are known to have been deeply penetrated from a very early period by Babylonian influences. But there is a prior question about these "legends"—

WERE THEY BORROWED AT ALL?

Abraham came indeed from Babylonia, and might have brought these stories with him. If he did, it must have been (on the theory) in their crude, polytheistic form. But is this likely? Critics forget, when they speak of the Spirit of revelation using these legends as a vehicle for the conveyance of great religious ideas, that before they could be "purified" and "used," they must have been appropriated. But is it credible that legends so polytheistic and grotesque would at any time be borrowed

by the Israelites? or that the work of "purifying" them —a huge and formidable task—was one that would commend itself to really pious minds? The character of the Biblical accounts speaks against this theory of their origin. They can most safely be regarded as an independent and purer branch of the old, religious tradition, cognate with the Babylonian, but not immediately derived from it.*

II.

Another very important aid derived from archæology is the abundant light cast by discovery on the early and familiar

USE OF WRITING.

The service of discovery here can hardly be over-estimated. The Bible makes us familiar with writing from the time of the Exodus. It suits critics now to make light of the objection that writing was not known in the age of Moses; but this was formerly an objection very often urged, and defenders of the Bible (like Hengstenberg) had to meet it as best they could by appeal to the hieroglyphics of Egypt, and to stray indications elsewhere. Now, no one doubts that, for a very long period before Moses, and in his own time, the civilised world was full of writing—of letters, books, and libraries. Writing, schools, go back in Babylonia to an almost fabulous antiquity. Egypt is not far behind. The hieroglyphic character is older than the first dynasty: a book of moral wisdom, much like our own "Proverbs," comes down to us from the 5th dynasty. The discovery of the official correspondence of Kings of Egypt of the 18th dynasty (*c*, 1400 B.C.) at Tel-el-Amarna shows

*See this view explained and defended in Kittel's *The Babylonian Excavations and Early Bible History* (E. T.), with Preface by Dr. Wade (S.P.C.K.).

that Canaan was at the time saturated with Babylonian culture. Cuneiform Babylonian was, in fact the recognised official language everywhere. The still later discovery of the great law-code of Hammurabi (the Amraphel of Gen. xiv.) proves that in Abraham's age whole codes of laws were engraved on monuments for public use. Other peoples (the Hittites, Cretans, &c.), had their own systems of writing.

It was still possible to urge that, while Egypt and Babylonia had their own forms of writing (hieroglyphic, cuneiform), there was no evidence of the early use of a kind of writing approaching that met with in the Bible. Even this last form of the objection seems destroyed by a discovery newly made at Sinai by Professor Flinders Petrie. In his book, *Researches in Sinai*, Professor Petrie tells how, in the course of the explorations at Serabit, specimens were found of a

NEW KIND OF WRITING,

several centuries older than the Exodus. "The ulterior conclusion," he says, "is very important—namely, that common Syrian workmen, who could not command the skill of an Egyptian sculptor, were familiar with writing at 1500 B.C., and this, a writing independent of hieroglyphics and cuneiform. It finally disposes of the hypothesis that the Israelites, who came through this region into Egypt and passed back again, could not have used writing. Here we have common Syrian labourers possessing a script which other Semitic peoples of this region must be credited with knowing" (p. 132).

Professor Petrie blends with his interesting facts a number of speculations which it is more difficult to accept. Thus he seeks to get rid of the difficulty of the numbers of the Israelites in the desert by the supposition (based on the fact that the Hebrew words for "thousand" and

"family" are the same), that in the census list in Numbers the numbers given are not really hundreds of thousands, but hundreds of "families." The total is thus reduced to about 5,000, which is all he thinks the desert could support (this difficulty is touched on below). It is perfectly obvious, however, that a host of this size —say 2,000 fighting men—did not conquer Canaan! On the other hand, Professor Petrie takes up the defence of the large numbers in the later historical books, which have stumbled so many (Cf. pp. 218-220).

III.

This is, perhaps, the place to refer to another important service which archæology has rendered, viz., in placing a check on the too easy practice of

RESOLVING HISTORICAL FACTS INTO MYTHS.

Few things are more remarkable in the later progress of discovery than the way in which historical persons and events, till lately relegated to the realm of myth, have had their rights restored to them as indubitably real The two first dynasties of Egypt were generally supposed to be mythical. Menes, the founder of the first dynasty, was quite surely so regarded, and writers like Maspero wrote learnedly to show how the myth originated! Now the tombs of these kings have been discovered, and the dynasties are restored to their real place in history. It has been the same elsewhere. "The spade of Dr. Schliemann and his followers has again brought to light the buried Empire of Agamemnon." (Sayce). King Minos of Crete was universally regarded as a myth. Now, as the result of the excavations of Dr. Evans, his palace has been disinterred, and travellers boast of having sat in his throne. Assyrian inscriptions have established

the historical existence of King Midas, of Phrygia (8th century B.C.), still described in text-books as an ancient divinity of the Northern Greeks and Phrygians, "A blessing-scattering nature-god!" Possibly some surprises are yet in store for those to whom the patriarchs—Abraham, Joseph, Jacob, &c.—are only products of the myth-forming fancy.

Even as it is, I would observe next, not a little illustrative and confirmatory light has been cast by exploration on the historical relations and conditions of life of

THE PATRIARCHAL AGE.

I have mentioned already the remarkable code of the great ruler Hammurabi, which presents interesting analogies to the laws of Moses, and has also curious points of relation with patriarchal customs in the Book of Genesis. For instance, the law takes account of precisely such relations as existed in Abraham's household between Sarah and Hagar, and directs what should be done should the woman afterwards have a dispute with her mistress because she has borne children (Arts. 145 146, &c.). Here is a touch of verisimilitude such as after invention could not have supplied.

In the historical sphere, the most crucial example is that of

CHEDORLAOMER.

The story of Chedorlaomer's expedition into Palestine in Gen. xiv. takes us back at least till about 2100 B.C.; it moves in strange surroundings, and relates unusual events; it gives the names of a number of kings, otherwise unknown to history; these stand in intricate relations to one another. It assumes that Babylonia was at this time under the suzerainty of a king of Elam. Who, writing at a later time, could possibly pick his

steps in such a story without falling into error? Yet what does discovery establish? That precisely as the chapter relates, Babylonia was at this time under the rule of an Elamitic dynasty; that a common, if not universal, prefix in the names of these rulers was "Kudur" (servant); that their power extended over Palestine; that the name "Chedorlaomer"—Kudur-lagamar (servant of Lagamar)—is a genuine Elamitic compound; that contemporary kings were Eriaku of Larsa (Arioch), Amraphel (Hammurabi), Tudgulu. Certain archæologists (Sayce, Hommel, Pinches) even claim that the name Chedorlaomer itself has been deciphered. Here is a clear corroboration of the framework of the story. It is difficult to understand how such facts should come to be known unless old and practically contemporary records were available.

In such a detailed history as that of

JOSEPH

we have another form of corroboration hardly less remarkable. The scene of the greater part of Joseph's life is laid in Egypt. It is always difficult to describe with accuracy the conditions of life, customs, domestic and social arrangements, political circumstances, of a foreign country; to picture its life in public and private, in courts and in humbler ranks, in slave-market, prison, and household, with ease, naturalness, and fidelity of colouring. Yet this is what has been accomplished in the history of Joseph. Egyptian life, manners, customs, relations of men and women, masters and servants, King and subjects, are, by general consent, pictured to perfection. Especially in those features of the description to which exception at an earlier stage was taken, as, *e.g.*, the use of flesh meat at feasts, the free manners of the women, the use of wine, &c., the monuments have

abundantly vindicated the picture given. The same thing is true of the Egyptian colouring in the narratives of the Exodus, so vivid and fresco-like. yet so true to reality! How is this careful accuracy of the narratives to be explained, except on the hypothesis that the story was early reduced to writing by one familiar with the country and the events of which he writes?

IV.

This brings me next to say a few words on the illustration which exploration has afforded of

THE MOSAIC PERIOD.

One remarkable discovery which cannot be overlooked was the finding of the actual mummies of all the great Pharaohs of the 18th and 19th dynasties. As it is certain that it was under one or other of these dynasties that the oppression of Israel and the Exodus took place, we can feel sure that the mummy of the veritable Pharaoh, on whose face Moses looked—the Pharaoh under whose oppression Israel groaned—is now in our possession. But who was it? The usual theory is that the Pharaoh of the oppression was the great ruler Rameses II., and the Pharaoh of the Exodus probably his son Meneptah. There is much in itself to be said for this identification. The conditions in many ways suit, and corroboration is found in the two cities Rameses and Pithom, which Pharaoh is said to have caused the Israelities to build (Ex. i. 11). Rameses is apparently the name of the king, and discovery shows that Rameses II. was connected with the building or rebuilding of both cities.

The matter, however, has been complicated by the more recent discovery of a monument of Meneptah, on which

is for the first time distinctly found. On this stela Meneptah boastfully records his victories over several peoples in and about Palestine, and apparently includes Israel among these. "Israel is spoiled," it reads, "it hath no seed." On the assumption that Meneptah is the Pharaoh of the Exodus, this must be understood to mean that Israel, lost to view in the wanderings of the desert, was regarded as cut off, destroyed, so that no successors were left. But the more natural view is, that Israel, in Meneptah's reign, was already in Palestine. In this case, of course, Meneptah could not be the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

There is, however, another fact that speaks strongly against this identification, viz.,

THE CHRONOLOGY.

It is certain, in view of the Chedorlaomer synchronism, that Abraham's date cannot be put later than about 2100 B.C.; this leaves fully 850 years between Abraham and the Exodus under Meneptah (after 1250 B.C.), which is a couple of centuries more than the Biblical data will allow. On the other side, the period between the Exodus and the Founding of the Temple (*c.* 975 B.C.) is much too short (Cf. 1 Kings vi. 1). We seem driven by superior probability, therefore, to put back the Exodus into the previous 18th dynasty, where the dates absolutely suit (*c.* 1450), where also the conditions are equally favourable, if not more so. The oppressor, on this view, which many now adopt, will be the great monarch Thothmes III., and the Pharaoh of the Exodus will be one of his immediate successors, Amenophis II. or Thothmes IV. The "store-cities," in this case, were built under Thothmes, and perhaps re-built or enlarged

by Rameses.* Fifty or sixty years later we have the great irruption of the "Chabiri" into Palestine, described in the Tel-el-Amarna letters. Many scholars who adopt the earlier date are disposed to identify this irruption with the Hebrew invasion.

As was naturally to be expected, much attention has been bestowed by explorers on

THE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS,

and on the topography of the desert in which Israel so long wandered. It is the barest truth to say that the remarkable accuracy of the Biblical accounts on these matters has been endorsed by every investigator of importance. Most of the spots in the route have been identified; the descriptions of the utter barrenness and desolation of the desert are confirmed to the letter (Cf. Palmer, Brugsch, Petrie, &c.). The difficulty that arises is as to the means of obtaining sustenance in such a place for so large a host as the Israelites are represented to have been. Professor Petrie, as noted above, will have it that the desert was as infertile then as it is to-day, and could not support more than some 5,000 souls. Others, as Palmer, believe that in many parts vegetation and wood were originally much more abundant. In any case, the reader of the Bible recalls that the narrative itself emphasises the frequent dire straits of the people in their journeyings from want of water, famine, absence of flesh food and vegetables, &c., and makes this the very ground of a series of Divine interpositions, which relieved their immediate needs, and provided them, in the manna, with a daily sustenance. The one thing we can be sure of is, that God did not bring His people into the desert without securing that

* Rameses II. was in the habit of appropriating the works of his predecessors, and giving his name to them.

they would be provided with what things were necessary for their subsistence.

V.

When we come down to the period of the Kings, the notices on the monuments of the relations between Israel and surrounding peoples become more numerous, and often read like extracts from the Bible pages themselves. The

NAMES AND DOINGS OF THE KINGS,

and events narrated in Scripture, like Shishak's invasion, Mesha's rebellion, the fall of Samaria, and captivity of Israel, Sennacherib's invasion, are inscribed in the contemporary records of the peoples or rulers concerned. Sometimes additional information is imparted. We learn that Shishak's invasion extended to the cities of Israel and Judah (Cf. 2 Chron. xii. 3, 4, which enlarges the account of 1 Kings xiii. 25, 26); that Jehu paid tribute to Shalmaneser II., king of Assyria: that Ahab fought, as an ally of Ben-hadad, at the battle of Karkar, in the end of his life (Cf. 1 Kings xx. 34; xxii. 1); that Sargon was the conqueror of Samaria, &c.

One special service which Assyrian discovery has done is in

RECTIFYING THE CHRONOLOGY

of the kings of Israel and Judah, as given in the margins of our Bible. The Assyrians had a very exact system of reckoning, based on the succession of yearly officers, and their lists (the so-called Eponym Canon) are confirmed by independent monuments, eclipses, &c. The points of contact with the Biblical history are not few, and reveal a growing discrepancy upwards from the fall of Samaria, 722 B.C., where the dates coincide, till in the

reign of Ahab it amounts to over 40 years, after which it does not increase much. *E.g.*, the usual date for Ahab's death is 898 B.C., whereas the inscriptions show him present, probably in his last year, at the battle of Karkar in 854 B.C. The founding of the Temple of Solomon, placed about 1012 B.C., has to be correspondingly lowered.

How is this to be explained? An examination of the Biblical numbers themselves suggests the reasons of the discrepancy. In summing up the total years of the reigns of the kings of Judah, on the one side, and those of the kings of Israel on the other, till the fall of Samaria, we find that the Judæan line is some twenty years longer than the northern one. To harmonise this difference, the ordinary chronology inserts two interregnums (one of eleven years after the death of Jeroboam II., and one of nine years after the death of Pekah), of which the Biblical history affords no hints. It is now generally allowed that the real explanation of this inequality lies in

"ASSOCIATIONS"

of certain of the kings, as of Jotham with his father, Uzziah (Cf. 2. Chron. xxvi. 21), and possibly of Uzziah (Azariah) himself, with his own father Amaziah (Cf. 2 Kings xiv. 22).* Another part of the explanation of the divergence no doubt is the practice of reckoning the king's reigns in round numbers of years, including those in which the reign began and ended. The effect of this would be that, with every change on the throne, the year of change would be reckoned twice. These two causes

* This, admittedly, creates a difficulty in relation to certain of the cross references in the Bible text, which seem to go on the assumption that the reigns were wholly separate. In part this may be only seeming, and some of the references may embody data which our imperfect knowledge prevents us from fully harmonising with other statements. The cross references are due to the compiler.

explain nearly the whole discrepancy, but one must reckon also with occasional possible corruptions of numbers, which in some cases, as in the "twenty years" of Pekah, are shown by the Assyrian inscriptions to have taken place.

A striking example of how discovery throws light on dark places of Scripture, and furnishes corroboration of disputed statements, is seen in the case of

SARGON,

the conqueror of Samaria. In Is. xx. 1 we read that Sargon, the king of Assyria, sent his Tartan unto Ashdod, who fought against Ashdod, and took it. But Sargon was a King totally unknown to history. No ancient writer mentions him. "Tartan" was equally a strange term. Sargon, accordingly, was voted by many a "myth." Various expedients were resorted to by others to solve the difficulty (identification with Shalmaneser IV., &c.). By a curious coincidence, the very first discovery made in Assyrian exploration (by Botta, in 1843) was that of the ruins of the great palace of this very Sargon. Hilprecht, the distinguished explorer, has said: "There never has been roused again such a deep and general interest in the excavation of distant Oriental sites as towards the middle of the last century, when Sargon's palace rose suddenly out of the ground, and furnished the first faithful picture of a great epoch of art, which has vanished completely from human sight."* Sargon is now one of the best-known of the later Assyrian kings. His name, portrait, sculptures, annals, including this siege of Ashdod, were found in his palace. He was the father of Sennacherib, and the final conqueror of Samaria, completing the work Shalmaneser had begun, and carrying the people captive into Assyria.† Tartan is

*_Explorations in Bible Lands_, p. 87 †But see p. 264.

the official name for the Assyrian Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

Another instance of the confirmations of the Bible furnished by the monuments may be taken from

THE PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH.

Jeremiah's lot was a hard one after the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans, in fulfilment of his own constantly-repeated predictions. He voluntarily cast in his lot with the remnant of the people in the land, but a few months later Gedaliah, the Governor, was foully murdered, and fear of the Chaldæans led even those who had avenged the murder and rescued "the king's (Zedekiah's) daughters" (Jer. xli., xlii.) to contemplate flight into Egypt. Jeremiah, in God's name, urged them to remain, and told them that their flight would end in their destruction. Angry at the prophet, Johanan and the rest not only went down to Egypt, but compelled Jeremiah to go with them. They settled in a frontier place called Tahpahnes, where Jeremiah gave further prophecies (ch. xliii., &c.). As a special sign, he was ordered to take great stones, and hide them in mortar in the brick pavement (R.V.) at the entrance of Pharaoh's palace at Tahpahnes, then to declare that Egypt would be invaded by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who would set up his throne on these stones he had laid (ch. xliii.). The prophecy is repeated in ch. xliv. 30, and again in fuller form in ch. xlvi. 13 *ff.* (Cf. Ezekiel xxix.).

This place,

TAHPAHNES,

has commonly been identified with the later Daphnæ, and its site was discovered in a mound called Tel-Defeuneh. Here Flinders Petrie conducted successful excavations, laying bare the palace, and the square of brick pavement which stood in its entrance. Critics, nevertheless, have

always persistently affirmed the failure of Jeremiah's prophecies of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Egypt.* Yet at Syene itself, which Ezekiel notes as the bound of the invasion (ch. xxix. 10), the statue of a royal official has been discovered, in which this personage takes credit for having repaired the Temple after it had been laid waste by the Babylonians, whose ravages, he declares, he had checked at Nubia. The following may be cited from Dr. Pinches: "Just as successful were Nebuchadnezzar's operations against Egypt. According to an Egyptian inscription, the Babylonian king attacked Egypt in the year 577 B.C., penetrating as far as Syene and the borders of Ethiopia. Hophra, who still reigned, was deposed, the General Amasis being raised to the throne in his place to rule the land as a vassal of the Babylonian king. According to the only historical fragment of the reign of this king known, Nebuchadnezzar made an expedition to Egypt in his 37th year. This was, to all appearance, against his vassal Amasis, who, like Zedekiah, had revolted against the powers that raised him to the throne. The rebellion was suppressed, but the ultimate fate of Amasis is not known."† Does this look to an unprejudiced eye like non-fulfilment?

VI.

In connection with the discoveries at Tahpahnes, Professor Petrie points out how readily Greek names of instruments and other words might have found their way

*A reviewer has written of my own book: "It is patent that there are sundry predictions in Scripture which were not fulfilled—that of Ezekiel, for instance, that Egypt should be Nebuchadnezzar's reward for his assault on Tyre. That Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt is probable, but that he had anything like a permanent possession of it is certainly not true." (Ezekiel gives 40 years to the captivity of Egypt—a round number).

†*The O.T. in the Light of Hist. Records* &c., pp. 400-1.

into Hebrew, and into Babylon.* This bears directly on the last subject I shall allude to—the light thrown by archæology on

THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

This book has been the subject of severe attack, and there are undeniably difficulties connected with it which are not yet satisfactorily cleared up. The fact that it is written partly in Hebrew, partly in Aramaic, has suggested that it may have existed in two versions, and may latterly have undergone revision, and perhaps expansion. The one thing certain is that the attacks on its historical trustworthiness have been carried to quite unwarrantable extremes. I take up a popular work—Professor McFadyen's *Introduction to the Old Testament*—and find the author revelling in demonstrations of the book's inaccuracy (pp. 320 *ff.*). The objections are old as the hills, but they are confidently retailed as if nothing of the nature of an answer to them had ever been heard of. *E.g.*, "There was no siege and capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C., as is implied in i. 1 (Cf. Jer. xxv. 1, 9-11), nor, indeed, could there have been any till after the decisive battle of Carchemish," &c. But Jehoiakim's "fourth" year in the Jewish reckoning (Jer. xxv. 1) was his "third" year in the Babylonian way of reckoning† (Dan. i. 1), and this was the year of the battle of Carchemish (Jer. xlvi. 2; probably 605 B.C.). The expedition is that referred to in 2 Kings xxiv. 1 (Cf. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6, 7), when hostages were no doubt taken. "Again, Belshazzar is regarded as the son of Nebuchadnezzar (v.), though he was in reality, the son of Nabunaid." So Jesus was "the son of David," though

**Ten Years' Digging*, pp. 54 ff.; and in his *Tanis*, Pt. ii. p. 49.

†The Babylonians reckoned from the first year after accession. The chronological questions are too intricate to be gone into here.

not his immediate descendant. Not much is known of Nabonidus, but there is nothing improbable in the supposition that, like his predecessor, Neriglissar, he sought to strengthen his hold upon the throne by marrying a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. "Nor is there any room in this period of the history (538 B.C.) for 'Darius the Mede' (v. 31)." On the contrary, there is much plausibility in the suggestion that Cyrus gave his General, Gobryas, for a time, a delegated authority in Babylon. As much almost is implied in Cyrus's own words in his inscription: "Peace to the city did Cyrus establish; peace to all the province of Babylon did Gobryas, his Governor proclaim. Governors in Babylon he appointed."

Such objections have their sole ground in

OUR IGNORANCE,

but it is strange that the critic does not tell of the rebuke administered to such reasoning from ignorance by the discovery of the facts about Belshazzar himself. His name, too, was utterly unknown, and defenders of Daniel were fain to identify him with Nabonidus. He was another plain proof of the "unhistoricity" of the book. Yet inscriptions containing his name have multiplied, till we have now a tolerably clear idea of his position and part in the final struggle. It is not improbable that he is identical with the "Marduk-sar-uzur," in the third year of whose reign about this time a contract tablet is dated (Marduk=Bel). The accounts of the taking of Babylon in the inscription would seem to imply that, while Nabonidus commanded the forces in the field,

BELSHAZZAR

held the city within. When its outer parts were taken after the defeat and capture of Nabonidus, he retreated to the citadel and held it against Cyrus for several

months. At length it was overpowered, and Belshazzar was slain.

The "linguistic" objection is not more potent. We are told of "no less than five Greek words," which occur in two verses (ch. iii. 4, 5)—strange that not a trace of Greek words should occur anywhere else—and compel us "to put the book at the earliest, with the Greek period *i.e.*, after 331 B.C.)." But why? Because one ("psanterin"), by its change of l ('psalterion') into n "betrays the influence of the Macedonian dialect"—a quite groundless assertion*; "and another, 'symphonia,' is first found in Plato." Seeing, however, that neither Plato nor any other Greek classical writer ever uses this word in the sense of a musical instrument, the point of the argument is not very obvious. Hommel claims for the word a Chaldæan origin.

I do not dwell on the interpretations given by these writers of

THE PROPHECIES

in Daniel, though I own that they appear to me forced and unnatural in the extreme. What, *e.g.*, are we to think of the proposal to date "the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem" (Dan. ix. 25), in the prophecy of the 70 weeks, from 586 B.C., the date of the exile? (McFadyen). Or to make the first seven weeks (= 49 years) run out with the edict of Cyrus (537 B.C.)? Or to identify the last week of the 70 with 171-164, immediately preceding the death of Antiochus? While it is admitted that the intervening period of 62 weeks (= 434 years) cannot be got in between 537 and 171 (= 366 years). Yet Mr. McFadyen is of opinion that "with the first and last [of the above] periods there is no

*See Pusey's *Daniel*, pp. 27-8, and "Note" prefixed to 2nd Edit., p. 36.

difficulty"; and the middle period is got over by the remark that probably "during much of this long period the Jews had no fixed method of computing time"! "Traditional apologetics" has little to compare with shifts like these.

I have adduced enough, I think, to show that the Bible has nothing to fear, but everything to hope for, from the light that archæology can cast upon it.

VII

The Citadel—Christ

The Citadel—Christ

TILL recently, attention has been chiefly absorbed in the criticism of the Old Testament; now, as was hinted in the opening paper, the battle about the Bible tends again to concentrate itself in the New Testament, and supremely about the Central Figure there—Christ Himself.

This result was inevitable. The question

"WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?"

is one to which every age must anew give an answer, and into which, as time rolls on, every fresh phase in the controversy between faith and unbelief invariably resolves itself. Probably the question was never raised in a more acute form than it is at the present moment. It is a marvellous testimony to the truth of the apostolic declaration, "God gave unto Him the name which is above every name" (Phil. ii. 9), that in all the whirl of controversy the one thing on which earnest men seem to be agreed is, that on Christ and His religion, in some form, depend the world's religious hopes. A very negative writer, Weinel, does not hesitate to say: "After Jesus there is either His religion or no religion."* But who is Jesus, and what is His religion? Here the roads part, and a great gulf appears between those who receive Jesus

**Jesus im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, p. 292.

as the New Testament presents Him, and those who, professing to revere Him as the spiritual leader of the future, yet strip Him of every supernatural attribute, and, in loyalty, as they think, to the exigencies of modern thought, reduce Him to simply human and natural dimensions.

I.

For this avowedly is the alternative with which we are now presented. Observers of the signs of the times have long seen it coming,* and we should be thankful that disguises are at length being thrown off, and that we are frankly, and even passionately, told that nothing but a

PURELY HUMANITARIAN CHRIST

will satisfy the demands of the modern intellect.

It is not denied that the Gospels and other New Testament writings give us a very different picture. Prof. N. Schmidt, in his book, *The Prophet of Nazareth*, fully allows that the Christology of the creeds is a consistent development of what is found in the New Testament. "There is no chasm," he truly says, "between the latest forms of thought in the New Testament and the conceptions

*I have personally constantly urged that this was the "gravitation-level" of most of our modern theories about Christ. In an essay on "The Parisian School of Theology," in my volume on *Ritschlianism*, I wrote: "A universal Father-God, whose presence fills the world and all human spirits; Jesus, the soul of the race in whom the consciousness of the Father, and the corresponding spirit of filial love, first came to full realisation; the spirit of filial sonship learned from Jesus as the essence of religion and salvation—such in sum is the new theology. All else is dressing, disguise, *Aberglaube*, religious symbolism, inheritance of effete dogmatisms. Will this suffice for Christianity? It is this question which the Church of the immediate future will have to face, and meet with a very distinct 'yes' or 'no' (pp. 151-2)." That crisis seems now upon us.

prevalent in other [?] Christian writers of the second century. . . The creeds are a consistent development of certain ideas that unquestionably hold an important place in New Testament literature. . . . The chief factors in the construction of Christological dogma were an honest interpretation of the Scriptures and an equally honest interpretation of the facts of Christian experience" (pp. 4-6). This bears out what has often been urged on deaf ears, that the assault on so-called "dogmas" about Christ is not simply an attack on Church creeds, but, at bottom, an attack on the teaching of the New Testament itself; and it is good, again, to have matters brought to this naked issue.

Nevertheless, the Christ of "dogma," *i.e.*, a truly supernatural, divine Christ—the Incarnate Son—is rejected, and the newer science sets itself to disengage the real, historical, non-miraculous Jesus from the wrappages of tradition and legend in which His image is enswathed. When this is done, His person and religion are naturally found to have no resemblance to the Christ of the Pauline writings, and a cleft is assumed to exist between the genuine teaching of Jesus and the theology of Paul, who is credited with having given the lead to the disfigurement of Christianity that has since prevailed.

It cannot be too strongly repeated that here is

THE TRUE CENTRE

of current religious controversy. The views just indicated penetrate books, newspapers, magazines. In Germany an able and intensely active party has set itself to their propagation in the Press, and by means of cheap, popularly-written books (*Volksbücher*). Writers like Bousset, Neumann, Wernle represent them in translation in this country. The aid of fiction is called in, and the novel *Holyland* (*Hilligenlei*), now also translated, which

embodies a life of Jesus on the new lines, sells in its tens and well-nigh its hundreds of thousands. In America the movement is represented by recent books of the kind already named, Professor Foster's *Finality of the Christian Religion* and Professor Schmidt's *The Prophet of Nazareth*. All which gives matter for thought; for gratitude, too, I think, in the proof it affords that Jesus retains His supreme interest for the thoughts of men, and is to-day, as ever, compelling decision on His character and claims. Anything rather than indifference. When Christ is fairly set in the eyes of the world, His claims may be trusted to take care of themselves.

I shall say little more than I have done on the connection of this new phase of New Testament criticism with the

OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

we have already studied, though that is an aspect of the subject which should not be overlooked. The one movement is, in truth, merely a continuation of the other. The same principles, the same methods, rule in both. It was to common-sense vision an impossibility for criticism to riot in the fashion it had been doing for some decades in the old Testament, without at an early period descending, flushed with its successes there, to wreak a like work of disintegration on the New Testament. Only folly could imagine that it was possible to stand permanently with an advanced liberal leg in the Old Testament and a conservative leg in the New. As Professor Schmidt puts it: "The movement could not stop at the Old Testament" (p. 29). The critics, therefore, have the fullest justification for claiming that their New Testament work is but the logical carrying out of the principles for which assent had been obtained in Old Testament study; and surprise need not be felt when one sees Old Testament scholars like Wellhausen and Gunkel coming forward

to take their share in New Testament discussion. To some this will lend additional sanction to the results reached in the New Testament; to others, perhaps a larger number, the results may cast doubt, retrospectively, on the whole critical procedure.

II.

What verdict is now to be passed on this new, so-called "historical-religious" view of Jesus, in which the credit of the Gospels and Epistles—not to say the whole conception of Christianity as the world has hitherto understood it—is so absolutely at stake? I propose, in the first instance, to let the new view

PASS JUDGMENT ON ITSELF

by looking simply at the forces at work in its construction, and at the kind of results they yield.

First of all, it is important to observe that, in the new theories of the life of Jesus, as in the radical Old Testament criticism, the assumed premiss of the entire treatment is

THE DENIAL OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

This is where Professor Julius Kaftan, of Berlin, in his pamphlet, *Jesus und Paulus*, formerly noticed, joins issue. You claim, he says, to be applying an historical method. In reality your procedure has not its roots in method at all. What lies behind it is "the so-called 'modern view of the world'"—a view which embraces everything in an unbroken causal connection (pp. 4, 5). This being presupposed, the view of Christ and Christianity has to be clipped down to suit, at whatever expense to the history.*

*I formerly quoted some of Kaftan's strong words in this connection. I may give another sentence or two. The new procedure, he

This anti-supernaturalistic principle is not only admitted, but is *paraded*, in all the works I have named. A man is not a "modern" who does not admit it. Professor Foster goes further, and affirms: "An intelligent man who now affirms his faith in such stories ['miraculous narratives, like the Biblical'] as actual facts can hardly know what *intellectual* honesty means" (p. 132). It has come then to this, that, in a book published with the endorsement of the University of Chicago, it is declared that a man who believes any longer in the resurrection of Jesus can hardly be intellectually honest. Such arrogance, like "vaulting ambition," "o'erleaps itself," and only discredits the cause it is meant to support.

This, however, is the fundamental assumption of all these writers—of Bousset, of Wernle, of Professor Schmidt, of the author of the story *Holyland*, the Jesus of which is a nervous, self-doubting, semi-hysterical being, whose ideals are often admirable, but whose sanity is sometimes doubtful. Granting it, it is easy to see

WHAT HAVOC IT MAKES

of the Gospels. Jesus has, at all costs, to be reduced to natural dimensions. He is a man naturally born (Wellhausen simply cuts out Matt. i. ii., and Luke i. ii.). His parents were Joseph and Mary. He wrought no miracles in the proper sense, though faith cures may be attributed to Him. It is doubtful if He even claimed to be the Messiah (Schmidt denies it; Foster is doubtful, but allows the probability). When He died there was an

says, means this: "We will know the history, not as it is or was, but as it ought to be. Ought to be according to our presuppositions, according to the presuppositions of our modern view of the world" (p. 5). And he declares that to this mode of treatment "the believing community will never adapt itself. It will feel it to be an apostacy from faith. And this feeling which it has is thoroughly justified in fact" (p. 9).

earthly end of Him. The resurrection stories are legendary: what really lay behind them no one now knows, and science does not concern itself to ask. Precisely; but then, as one likewise sees, all this was really settled before the inquiry began; there is, therefore, no particular "critical method" involved in it. The problem to be dealt with was: "Assumed, to start with, that nothing supernatural entered into the birth, life, and death of Jesus, how to explain away the narratives which say that it did?" The whole matter, obviously, is a foregone conclusion, and unbiassed consideration of evidence is an impossibility.

This raises the question, which may be glanced at before going further—

BY WHAT RIGHT

is the supernatural thus ruled out of the history of revelation, and specially out of the history of Christ? It will be difficult, indeed, for these able gentlemen, who so freely charge "intellectual dishonesty" on their opponents, to give an answer which does not already beg the question. I notice that the intellectual lineage they claim for themselves as "moderns" usually has at its head Spinoza, and I grant that, in a system like Spinoza's, where God and Nature are one, there is no room for such deviations from, or transcendencies of, the natural order as we call

"MIRACLE."

But it is surely vastly different in a *theistic* scheme, in which God has a being above the world as well as in it, is a Being of Fatherly love, deeply interested in the welfare of His creatures, is free, self-determined, purposeful, has moral ends, overrules causes and events for the inbringing of a Kingdom of God. On this, the *Christian*

view of God, it is difficult to see why, for high ends of revelation and redemption, a supernatural economy should not be engrafted on the natural, achieving ends which could not be naturally attained; and why the evidence for such an economy should, *a priori*, be ruled out of consideration. The Christian thinker will not lightly accuse his opponents of "intellectual dishonesty," but he may with justice charge them with intellectual *inconsistency*, in denying to God, as so conceived, a power of entering, for redeeming ends, in a supernatural way, into human history.

This is, in short, a matter to be determined, not by

A PRIORI ASSUMPTIONS,

but on the ground of evidence; and it is equally a begging of the question to say that evidence cannot exist of a kind, degree, and quality adequate to sustain faith in the supernatural facts involved in the life of Jesus. Here is an ultimate dividing-line, and there is not the least likelihood that the general intelligence of men will ever endorse the high *a priori* negations of the modern theorists.

III.

The chief instrument by which the evidence for Christ's supernatural claims is broken down in these theories, I observe next, is a

RADICAL CRITICISM OF THE GOSPELS,

analogous to what we have seen employed in the Old Testament. The criticism will be looked at by itself in a succeeding paper; meanwhile, I note only a few results. The Gospels are taken from the writers whose names they bear, are put late, are declared to be in their main contents legendary, are accepted, rejected, altered, recon-

structed, at the critic's good pleasure. With what result? Everything, of course, that militates against the naturalistic hypothesis is cleared away. As to how much is left the authorities differ. Some of the more extreme will not allow Jesus to be an historical figure at all*; at most, only a few sayings can be attributed to Him with certainty (Schmiedel). Others do not go so far, and rescue from the "sources" the more or less vague outline of His ministry, and (probably) certain fragments of His teaching. It was with "a deep satisfaction," Professor Schmidt tells us, that he found himself "borne along" to the conviction "that Jesus of Nazareth actually existed," and that some of the events of His life and some of His words may be recovered! (pp. 233-4). Even if Professor Schmidt retains this as a personal conviction, one wonders how, in the clash of contradictory opinions, he is to convey his conviction to others, so as to make it, as he hopes, the basis of a religion of the future.

On much, however, even in this minimum of knowledge about Jesus, there rests by admission

GREAT UNCERTAINTY.

It is doubted, for instance, as by Wrede, Schmidt, and others, whether Jesus ever claimed to be the Messiah. Testimonies that He did are got rid of by the usual methods. With more plausibility it is denied by a considerable section (Wellhausen, Schmidt, &c.) that Jesus ever used the title "The Son of Man" as a Messianic designation, or in an emphatic sense at all. Jesus spoke in Aramaic, and the (alleged) Aramaic equivalent of this

*Prof. Foster writes: "At this writing the sensation of the hour in theological Germany is a brilliant and effective pastor, who has concluded that Jesus was an ideal construction of a definite social circle" (p. 326). The book, from which quotations are given, is, *Das Christus-Problem*, by A. Kalthoff (1903).

phrase, *barnasha*,* means simply, we are told, "man." So most of the passages in which the phrase occurs are emptied of their significance, and the word "man" is substituted (*e.g.*, "Man hath power on earth to forgive sins," "Man is Lord of the Sabbath," Mark ii. 10, 28). But not to refer to other passages where this meaning is impossible, the theory shatters on the simple fact that the authors of our Greek Gospels who, presumably, knew Aramaic, and were, on the theory, translating from it, plainly attached to the word or phrase the unique sense, "the Son of Man." Most scholars, accordingly, now again reject this philological speculation, and allow that Jesus used the title, as also the title "Son of God," which Schmidt would take from Him likewise. Still more futile is the attempt to eradicate

THE MESSIANIC CLAIM

from the life of Jesus. If any fact in history is well-attested, it is that Jesus was put to death for claiming to be the "King of the Jews"—the Messiah. His words, actions, claims, parables, the functions He ascribes to Himself (*e.g.*, Judge of the world), His behaviour on His last journey, the consentient accounts of His trial, admit of no other explanation. This is a rock-fast fact, on which criticism beats itself in vain.†

There is, however, yet another branch of the newer critical method which has of late come into great prominence and bids fair to be more heard of in the future—I mean the application to the Gospels of the method of

*It is very doubtful if this was the term Jesus employed.

†Even Bousset says in his *Jesus*: "It will be recognised more and more clearly as time goes on that the criticism which attempts to shake these well-established points of the tradition merely succeeds in overreaching itself" (p. 170).

This, likewise, is found a serviceable instrument for dissipating such narratives as those of the Virgin-birth and of the Resurrection into fantasies. Professor Gunkel, of Berlin, has made a noteworthy incursion into this field in a contribution to *The Religious-Historical Understanding of the New Testament*, but illustrations can be found nearer home. Like Gunkel, and like Farnell in his *Evolution of Religion*, Dr. Cheyne, in his *Bible Problems*, applies the "comparative" method, and finds the key to what is most distinctive in the Gospel history in ethnic mythology. He, too, complains that, while Old Testament criticism was sweeping the field, "the Higher Criticism of the New Testament was practically set on one side" (pp. 11, 12), and he endeavours in this volume to do something to supply the lack. On the basis of Arabian, Babylonian, Egyptian, and Persian parallels, he seeks to show how beliefs like those of the Virgin-birth of Jesus, His descent into Hades, (*not* in the Gospels), His resurrection, and His ascension arose. "On the ground of facts supplied by archæology, it is plausible," he thinks, "to hold that all these arose out of a pre-Christian sketch of the life, death, and exaltation of the expected Messiah [a thing no one ever heard of], itself ultimately derived from a widely-current mythic tradition respecting a solar deity" (p. 128). Paul's statement "that Christ died and that He rose again 'according to the Scriptures,' in reality points to a pre-Christian sketch of the life of Christ, partly—as we have seen—derived from widely-spread non-Jewish myths and embodied in Jewish writings" (p. 113).

One has only to take with this derivation of essential Christian beliefs from "primitive Oriental myths" (p. 117) the admission of Wellhausen in his *Introduction*

to the First Three Gospels, "The resurrection was the foundation of the Christian faith, the heavenly Christ, the living and present head of the disciples" (p. 96), to see whither such theories tend. But the reader will also mark the foundation—

A PURELY IMAGINARY "PRE-CHRISTIAN SKETCH,"*

based on Babylonian and other myths, which is first thought of as "plausible," then is converted into a certainty, and reasoned from as a fact! By such gossamer theories it is actually thought possible to subvert the faith of Christendom in its most characteristic facts!

As a type of theory of a yet more extravagant, but still kindred order, I might refer to the extraordinary speculation on the origin of Christianity in that much-belauded but, in this region, utterly fantastic book,

DR. J. G. FRAZER'S "GOLDEN BOUGH."†

The facts to be explained are the circumstances of our Lord's crucifixion (or the stories about these) and the belief in His divinity. For a clue to the belief, Dr. Frazer goes back to the Babylonians and Persians. These people, he tells us, had a custom, at a spring festival, of dressing a condemned criminal in the royal robes, enthroning him, granting him for five days all the privileges of the king—an incarnation of the god, for whom the criminal was a substitute—then stripping, flogging, and hanging him. At an earlier period, he avers, the king himself, after one year's reign, had been wont to be sacrificed. The Jews are supposed to have taken over this custom from the Persians, and to have observed it

*Prof. Schmidt also has his hypothetical pre-Christian Aramaic apocalypse, which he thinks is used in the Gospels (p. 132).

†The theory is propounded in the *second* edition of the work.

at the feast known as Purim. They further borrowed a practice *assumed* to have existed of keeping a *pair* of condemned criminals, one of whom was sacrificed, the other was set free. It was in a scene of this kind that Jesus is conjectured to have taken the part of the mock-king, and, after having had the honours of royalty, with its accompanying divinity, thrust upon Him, to have been ignominiously stripped, scourged, and crucified!

It would be a waste of time to treat this theory of Dr. Frazer's as a serious explanation of the events of the crucifixion. But the reader will certainly be astonished to discover, if he takes the trouble to inquire, that the whole thing, from bottom to top, is a

PYRAMID OF BASELESS CONJECTURE.

There is not, so far as appears, a scintilla of real evidence that the Babylonians or Persians ever had such a custom of sacrificing a god-king, or a substitute, at a spring festival; or that the Jews borrowed or possessed it; or that such scenes as are described were enacted at the feast of Purim; or that any such ideas were connected with Christ's mockery, scourging, and death! *

It is pitiful to think of such a tissue of fancies being seriously put forward (even though "with diffidence") by a scholar who is far too enlightened to accept the straightforward narratives of the Gospels.

IV.

It is now *our* turn to look at these theories of a non-miraculous Christ with critical eyes, and to ask how far

*See the whole theory, with its germ in an anecdote (possibly mythical) attributed to Diogenes the Cynic by Dion Chrysostom (end of first contury) subjected to a minute and shattering examination in Andrew Lang's *Magic and Religion*.

their own principle, in the hands of these writers, can be

CONSISTENTLY CARRIED THROUGH,

and, if it is, with what results.

Suppose, for example, the physical miracles are surrendered in obedience to this denial of the miraculous —of course, they are not surrendered—what of the *spiritual* miracle—

THE SINLESSNESS OF CHRIST?

Here is something, supposing it granted, quite as much above the sphere of nature as we know it—as truly requiring a supernatural cause to explain it—as any miracle of power. Here, in the Gospels, is the picture of the One Being in history, who, with unparalleled spiritual insight, betrays absolutely no consciousness of sin in Himself, who knows no repentance, who was accepted by those who knew Him best as without sin, who is the physician, Saviour, forgiver of sinners, but never classes Himself with them, whose recorded words, acts, spirit, and total behaviour bear out this character of spotless holiness and unbroken unity of will with God—how is such an One to be fitted into the natural scheme. Can it be done?

It cannot be done. Not one of these writers but hedges when he comes to the question of the sinlessness of Jesus. Prof. Foster will go no further than to say that He is "the best we know" (p. 482). Prof. Schmidt says: "He seems to have had no morbid sense of sin. His consciousness of imperfection was swallowed up in the sense of divine love" (p. 25).* Both writers lay stress on Christ's word, "No one is good but God," and infer from it that "He remained conscious of this great distance from God" (Foster, p. 345; cf. Schmidt, p. 152;

*"Sin" has little place in this writer's book at all: his Index does not mention it in any connection.

Bousset, p. 202). The author of the novel *Holyland* affirms boldly, "His nature was not wholly free from evil," and refuses to be bound even by His morality (p. 359)—indeed, plays loose with morality in his book to the degree of sanctioning immorality.* Thus, under the new influences, the decomposition of even Christ's moral image and moral doctrine proceeds. All, it must be contended, in wanton defiance of the historical reality.

Or take what is left us by the better class of these writers—

A GREAT, SPIRITUAL, FORCEFUL PERSONALITY,

with true knowledge of God, and elevation and originality of moral character, qualifying Him to be the spiritual leader of mankind. How is even this to be accounted for? Does the non-miraculous view of Christ explain it? Here, strangely enough, in Prof. Foster's book, we come on something singularly like a retraction of the proposition with which we set out, viz., that nothing can be admitted of the nature of miracle. For we are now explicitly told (what is most true) that Jesus is inexplicable psychologically, causally, or by evolutionary development (pp. 265, 267); that something derived creatively from God is necessary to explain His consciousness. Psychological analysis, we read, "collapses on the *immediacy* of His consciousness. Ultimately we stand before the insoluble datum of His certainty of a special communion with God, and of His knowledge of God arising thereby. It is not possible to escape from the recognition of an *active* and *creative* moment in the

*A sympathetic expounder of the ideas of Frenssen's book writes: "If his theological teaching is considered dangerous by many, his moral teaching and its probable effect on the youth of Germany is regarded with still more trepidation. . . . No wonder that even one of his friends in the Liberal camp says, 'We are afraid for the youth of our land.'" (*Scotsman*, October 20, 1906).

consciousness of Jesus, which, just on that account, cannot be *causally* explained" (p. 265). "The empirical inexplicability of Jesus may as well be conceded" (p. 267). True, but is there not here the break up of the author's earlier scheme of thought, in which no room seemed left for the immediate entrance of God into either the material or the spiritual order? And if "empirically inexplicable" facts occur in the spiritual order, why may they not occur in the natural order as well? Is the former less a domain of law than the latter?

All this, however, it is to be confessed, does not carry us very far. It leaves us still far short of that perfect

ONENESS OF THOUGHT AND WILL

with the Father (Matt. xi. 27) which, combined with Christ's consciousness of His own unique dignity and place in revelation, and with claims, functions, prerogatives which no ordinary messenger of God ever dared to claim, only finds its adequate explanation in that relation to the Father, going beyond all time, which the Pauline Epistles and Fourth Gospel unfold to us. This perfect "solidarity" of Christ with God—to use a phrase of Ritschl's—is as much a fact of the first three Gospels as it is of the Gospel of John. It was not, as alleged, from Alexandrian philosophy, or any form of "metaphysics," but, as John tells us, with his feet on the earth, as the result of what he had himself seen, heard, beheld, handled of Jesus, that this Apostle rose to the assurance that in Him "the life was manifested," even "the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us" (1 John i. 2); or, as he states it in the Gospel, "We beheld His glory, glory as of an only-begotten from the Father," and so were able to affirm, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth" (John i. 14).

It is in vain that criticism tries to eliminate

THESE SUPERNATURAL TRAITS

from the portrait of Jesus in the Gospels. The parts of Christ's history and teaching which the critics accept stand in inseparable relation with the parts which they reject, in the unity of a picture so superhuman, so original, so perfect, that the idea of its creation by irresponsible legendmongers of the second or third Christian generation may be put out of court as an impossibility. Only the most arbitrary manipulation, *e.g.*, can expunge from the Gospels the lofty Messianic claims, and the eschatological discourses and utterances in which Jesus predicts His return in glory to judge the world.* He is not, like others, a simple member of the Kingdom of God, but Himself the Founder of the Kingdom, and King and Lord over it. He alone mediates to men the knowledge of the Father. *They* are "sons of God" by admission into the Kingdom; he is "*the* Son," distinct and unique in His relation to the Father. Others are exhorted to "faith"; the term "faith," or cognate terms, are never once applied to Jesus in the Gospels. He *knows* the Father: His relation is too intimate, immediate, reciprocal to be described by the weaker term. The difficulty of the critics is to reconcile with these claims the modesty of One whom, with all Christendom, they recognise as the perfect pattern of meekness, self-abnegation, and suffering dignity.

*The alleged failure of these predictions will be remarked on after. Kaftan well shows that Christ's mind never wavered (as the new writers represent) on His Messianic calling. "If anything in His life is historically certain, it is this, that Jesus, from beginning to end, reckoned with unshaken confidence on the vindication of His Messiahship by the Father" (p. 21).

V.

What more is to be said on this subject must be reserved till we come to the discussion of the Gospels themselves. Meanwhile, I would only point out that, for such an One, even as the first three Gospels depict Him, there is no incongruity, but

THE DIVINEST FITNESS,

alike in the manner of His entering the world, by a supernatural birth, and in the manner of His exit from it, by resurrection and ascension. I may close this paper accordingly by a few words on these cardinal points—the Virgin-birth of Christ and the Resurrection.

In recent years there has been an almost virulent assault upon the narratives in Matthew and Luke of

THE VIRGIN-BIRTH

of Jesus; and, led away by plausible reasonings, too many have been induced to surrender these narratives as legendary, or lightly to admit that belief in this article is unessential to faith in Christ as the Incarnate Word. The alleged discrepancies in the narratives are paraded, but special stress is laid upon the fact that the story of the Nativity is not found in Mark (the oldest Gospel) or in John; was, apparently, not known to Paul, or other writers in the New Testament; was not known in the early Church, &c. But a great deal more is here asserted than anyone can ever prove. On the historical point, it may be sufficient to say that, apart from the Jewish Ebionites, and certain of the Gnostic sects, no body of Christians is ever known to have existed which did not receive as part of their faith the birth of Jesus from the Virgin. It is a curious irony which makes the narrowest and most retrograde of Jewish Christian sects (the

Nazarenes, or more tolerant party, accepted the belief) the true representatives of Apostolic Christianity.

As respects the

WITNESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,

the facts about the Gospels are not correctly stated. It is true that Mark—who commences his Gospel, however, with the words, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, *the Son of God*"—has not this narrative, but then he has nothing to say of the infancy and early life of Jesus at all—is therefore not a witness, either yea or nay. John, similarly, does not narrate the earthly birth of Jesus, but contents himself with the heavenly descent. "The Word became flesh," he declares; *how* he does not tell. But surely the very assertion of so transcendent a fact is in itself in keeping with what is narrated in the other Gospels.

John had unquestionably the other Gospels in his hands, and there is not the least reason to suppose that he meant to contradict them. The silence of these two Gospels, therefore, proves nothing. On the other hand, we have the fact that the two Gospels which *do* narrate the birth of Jesus declare him to have been, in the words of the Creed, "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Paul's silence, again, is not wonderful, if we remember that it was not Paul's habit to relate the facts of Christ's life. It is Paul's companion, Luke, nevertheless, who gives one of the narratives of the miraculous birth, and Paul can hardly be supposed ignorant of what Luke knew. Has Paul, moreover, nothing supernatural in view when he speaks of "the second man from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47), and of Jesus as "born of a woman, born under the law" (Gal. iv. 4)?*

* Literally "made" or "become" of a woman; not as in Matt. xi. 11.

There were obvious reasons why much should not be said publicly on this subject while Mary lived.

THE BEARINGS ON CHRISTIAN FAITH

of this miracle of Christ's entrance into the world will be belittled by no one who reflects clearly on what Incarnation means. Miracle is probably involved, in part even on the physical side, in the creation of a sinless personality. It is certainly involved in the entrance of the eternal Son of God into union with our humanity. This may not prove, indeed, that precisely *this* mode of miraculous entrance by birth from a Virgin was necessary. But, if the general fact of miracle in Christ's birth is admitted, there will not be usually much stumbling at the Gospel narratives.*

That Christ was

NOT HOLDEN BY DEATH,

but rose from the dead on the third day, is the belief on which, by universal admission, the Christian Church from its first beginnings, reposed. The fact is certain that, within a few weeks of their Lord's crucifixion and burial, the first Apostles were energetically proclaiming that Jesus was risen from the dead in the streets of the very city where He had been crucified. It was in no weak and credulous spirit that this fact was accepted. Paul writes on the subject with the fullest sense of responsibility (1 Cor. xv. 15), and gives his evidence in detail (v. 4-8). The Gospels fill out the story with circumstantial narratives, which must have emanated from the first circle of disciples, and which, despite a few difficulties in harmony, very natural in the circumstances,† vibrate with the consciousness of truth. Pentecost follows Easter

*I have discussed this subject with some fulness in a paper on " The Miraculous Conception " in my volume on *Ritschlianism*.

†On these see later, pp. 279-81.

(Acts ii.) and confirms and ratifies its message. The doctrinal bearings of the resurrection are manifoldly elucidated. By it the seal was placed on Christ's whole work and claims; through it He became the first fruits of them that slept (1 Cor. xv. 20); in it the work of redemption is completed, with inclusion of the body (Rom. viii. 23), and a sure hope of immortality is opened to the world (2 Tim. i. 10; 1 Pet. i. 3).

Against this great corner-stone of Christain faith and hope the waves of scepticism have ever beat in vain.

THEORY AFTER THEORY

has been invented to explain it—imposture theories, swoon theories, vision theories, spiritualistic appearances—but each effectually refutes the others; and the empty grave and manifestations of the Risen One remain as inexplicable as ever. The newest hypothesis I have seen, that of Oscar Holtzmann, in his recent *Life of Jesus* is, I confess, a novelty. It is, in brief, that Joseph of Arimathæa, in whose new tomb Jesus was laid, not liking the idea of a crucified malefactor reposing in his honourable family fault, had the body secretly removed! Hence the empty tomb and the belief of the disciples that Christ had risen! Could anything, one may ask, be more exquisitely wooden than this suggested solution of the mystery of faith on which the Christian Church is built?

The outcome of the whole is that naturalism does *not* hold in its hands the answer to the question—Who is Christ? The Christ of the Gospels and the Epistles still lives and rules.

VIII

The Bulwark of the Gospels

The Bulwark of the Gospels

AS mentioned in last paper, the attack on the supernatural claims of Christ is conducted in part through an unsparing criticism of the Gospels. The Gospels are, besides, an offence in themselves through the miraculous elements they contain. Every means known to criticism, therefore, is employed to weaken their testimony. The Gospel of John is treated as a historical romance; the first three Gospels are discredited by separating them from their recognised authors, and by an account of their origin, relations, and dependence on late and unreliable tradition, which undermines all certainty in regard to them. Yet it is precisely here, I believe, that the attempts at an anti-supernaturalistic construction of the life of Jesus, and of the beginnings of Christianity, can be most successfully beaten off. The Gospels stand as

A FOURSQUARE BULWARK

upon which assault will be found to be in vain against all such endeavours.

Many are of a very different opinion. They see the work of historical disintegration being actively pursued,

and appear to take it for granted that the task is already finished, and that only inveterate prejudice can prevent anyone from acknowledging that the credit of the Gospels is hopelessly destroyed. This is a great illusion. I have already pointed out how, along with these disintegrating forces, other influences not less powerful are at work, tending to re-establish confidence in the trustworthiness of our records. I illustrated the complete breakdown of the older Tübingen theory of the Gospels and other New Testament writings. Yet more recently there has come aid from unexpected quarters in

RESTORING THE CREDIT OF ANCIENT TRADITION.

It is ten years since Harnack declared in the preface to his work on *Old Christian Literature* that (I quote from Dr. Sanday) "the results might be summed up by saying that the oldest literature of the Church, in its main points and in most of its details, from the point of view of literary history, was veracious and trustworthy."* In his recent book on *Luke the Physician*, Harnack reaffirms this opinion even more strongly. That book is itself a masterly vindication, in opposition to current tendencies, of the Lucan authorship of the third Gospel and of the Acts. The Gospel of John had been most uncompromisingly assailed, when suddenly, as Dr. Sanday says,

THE AIR WAS CLEARED

by the publication of Dr. Drummond's *The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, a convincing defence of its genuineness, which, as coming from a Unitarian, could not be ascribed to theological bias. With Dr. Drummond's treatise has to be taken Dr.

* Cf. Sanday's *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 42.

Stanton's valuable work, *The Gospels as Historical Documents* (Pt. I.), and Dr. Sanday's own important volume, *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel.** The remarkable thing in these and other works which have recently appeared is, in my opinion, not simply the evidence they afford of a change in the trend of critical judgment, but the trenchant way in which they assail the *methods* and *principles* by which, in the later periods, critical results have been reached. †

I.

It is not possible, in a brief paper, to enter with any minuteness into the complicated questions connected with the authorship and relations of the Gospels, but a few outlines may be traced, and some facts brought forward, which may help to show

THE STRENGTH OF THE EVIDENCE

by which the credibility of the Gospels is supported. A little may be said first on the general nature of the evidence, and on the principles which should guide us in judging of it.

The manuscript evidence for the Gospels is, in comparison with that, say, for the classics, early and extraordinarily abundant. The existence of an ancient book, however, may be proved in many other ways than by the possession of actual manuscripts of it. The existence of a book may be proved by references to it,

*An interesting defence of John's Authorship, by Prof. Peake, appears in an article on "The Fourth Gospel," in the *London Quarterly Review*, October, 1905.

†Dr. Sanday comments on this feature in Dr. Drummond's work, and his own book is a trenchant criticism of current methods. I showed before that the same is true of recent works by Harnack, Kaftan, &c.

quotations from it, or accounts of it; by catalogues, by early translations or versions, by controversies in which its principles are discussed. A very little evidence, if we are satisfied of its genuineness, is often sufficient to carry us a long way.

AN ILLUSTRATION

may set this in a clearer light. In Macaulay's Essay on the authoress Madame D'Arblay, who died in 1840, we have the following sentences:—"The news of her death carried the minds of men back at one leap over two generations to the time when her first literary triumphs were won. . . . Since the appearance of her first work sixty-two years had passed, and this interval had been crowded not only with political but also with intellectual revolutions." We are further informed that this first work was called *Evelina*, and was published in 1778.

Now few, probably, of the readers of these pages have ever heard before of Madame d'Arblay, and still fewer, I am sure, have either seen or read the book referred to. Yet no one, I think, would dream of doubting that this single reference in Lord Macaulay is amply sufficient evidence that such a book, bearing the name of *Evelina*, existed, that Madame D'Arblay, then Frances Burney, was the author of it, and that it was published in or about 1778, now over a century and a-quarter ago. Thus one step takes us back over that long interval; and we would accept with equal confidence Macaulay's testimony to a book of the time of the Puritans, or of the Reformation, or to a work of poetry or theology from even earlier centuries.

In fact, we seek, as a rule, no better proof of the genuineness of a work than the fact that it is, and has

ALWAYS BEEN RECEIVED

as a genuine work of the author to whom it is ascribed. Few persons doubt that the poems ascribed to Robert Burns are really his, or that Bunyan wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress*, or that Charles Wesley composed the hymns that bear his name; yet the chief ground which most of us have for these beliefs is that the works in question now are, and we understand, universally have been, attributed to the authors concerned, with the impossibility of supposing that they could have been published and circulated, and have obtained this undisputed acceptance without the mistake, or fraud, being at the time, or soon after, detected and exposed. These are the ordinary principles we apply in judging of books, and it is only by bearing them in mind that we can fairly judge of the exceptional strength of the evidence which supports the four Gospels.

Applying, then, this test of general reception, let the reader take his stand for a moment in the

LAST QUARTER OF THE SECOND CENTURY

—an interval from the time of the composition of the Gospels shorter than from the publication of Madame D'Arblay's book to our own day. Plenty of literature has come down to us from that period, and, in the clear light it casts on the conditions of the time, what do we find? The four Gospels—the four we have—and none else, in universal circulation and undisputed use throughout the Church, unanimously ascribed to the authors whose names they bear,* circulating not only in their original tongues, but in Latin, Syriac,† and other trans-

*There is a slight exception in the obscure sect of the Alogi, who rejected the Fourth Gospel on dogmatic grounds.

† On these early versions we see Westcott and Hort's *New Testament*, Introduction, pp. 78 *ff.* It is a question recently raised whether Tatian's (Syriac) Harmony (*c.* 170) is not the oldest Syriac version.

lations, freely used, not only by Fathers of the Church, but by pagans and heretics, and by these also ascribed to the disciples of Christ as their authors. We find harmonies made of them,* commentaries written on them, and catalogues of books drawn up, in which they stand at the head; and all this, with just as little doubt, or trace of dissent, as in the case of the works above named among ourselves.†

II.

I take a few examples. The

MOST REPRESENTATIVE NAMES

in the Church in the last quarter of the second century are those of Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, Tertullian, of Carthage, and Clement, head of the Catechetical School in Alexandria, whom Origen succeeded a little later (203 A.D.). It is said that from the works of Origen alone the New Testament, if lost, could nearly be reconstructed. But Origen, with all the others named, bears emphatic testimony to the universal acceptance, sole authority, and undisputed authorship of the four Gospels with which we are familiar. The testimony of such as Irenæus is peculiarly valuable, in that he not only conveys to us the witness of the Church of his own day, but himself stood in a line of succession which reached back

*Tatian (see below) and one ascribed to Theophilus by Jerome. (Westcott, *Canon*, p. 208).

† "I would invite attention," says Dr. Sanday, "to the distribution of the evidence in this period: Irenæus and the Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons in Gaul, Heracleon in Italy, Tertullian at Carthage, Polycrates at Ephesus, Theophilus in Antioch, Tatian at Rome and in Syria, Clement at Alexandria. The strategical positions are occupied, one might say, all over the Empire. In the great majority of cases there is not a hint of dissent. On the contrary, the fourfold Gospel is regarded for the most part as one and indivisible" (*Fourth Gospel*, p. 238).

to the very days of the Apostles. Irenæus was brought up in Asia Minor, and as a youth sat at the feet of Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle John; in later life, having gone to Gaul, he became Bishop of Lyons in succession to Pothinus, an old man, whose life must have stretched back into the first century, before the Apostle John died. To the end of his life Irenæus retained vivid recollections of the

DISCOURSES OF POLYCARP,

"and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord and about His miracles, and about His teaching, Polycarp, as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate them, altogether in accordance with the Scriptures."*

Is it conceivable that a man of this kind could have been deceived about the Gospel of John, of which his master, Polycarp, must have been able to tell him something, and the genuineness of which he himself unhesitatingly endorses?

Leaving aside the testimony of lists and versions, I take an older instance. Early Christian writers inform us that Tatian, the disciple of Justin Martyr, wrote a work called

THE "DIATESSARON,"

—a "combination of four"—and that this work, extant in their time, was a Harmony of the Four

*This in a letter to a fellow-disciple of Polycarp, Florinus, who had lapsed into Gnosticism. Referring to the vain efforts of critics to get rid of this testimony, Dr. Drummond says:—"Critics speak of Irenæus as though he had fallen out of the moon, paid two or three visits to Polycarp's lecture-room, and had never known anyone else. In fact, he must have known all sorts of men, of all ages, both in the East and the West."—p. 348.

Gospels. The date of this work may have been about 170 A.D. It was pretty obvious that if a writer of that date was engaged in making a Harmony of the Four Gospels, these must already have had a long established position and authority in the Church, and this was fatal to the theory of their late origin and unauthoritative character. Every attempt, therefore, was made to shake the force of this evidence from Tatian. It was attempted to be shown—as by the author of *Supernatural Religion*—that no such book existed; or, if it did, that it was not a Harmony of the Gospels; or, if it was a Harmony, it was not of our Four. This was held, though ancient writers testified that a well-known personage, Ephraem the Syrian, had written a commentary on the work. Thus the question stood, till, in 1876, a Latin translation of an Armenian version of the Commentary of Ephraem was published; and in 1888 an Arabic translation of the *Diatessaron* itself was brought to light. Then it was found, what should never really have been doubted, that the famous *Diatessaron* was, after all, a blending of our four Canonical Gospels.

Tatian is likewise a witness to the Fourth Gospel in his earlier work, *An Address to the Greeks* (*c.* 150 A.D.).

Tatian's master was

JUSTIN MARTYR,

one of the most important witnesses in the middle of the century. The works of this early writer embody in large part the history of the first three Gospels, and show acquaintance with the Gospel of John in numerous passages, as, notably, the following:—"For Christ also said, Unless ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. But that it is impossible for those who are once born to enter into the wombs of those who

brought them forth is evident to all."* The quotation is free, but one cannot mistake the reference to John iii. 5-8. Nor does Justin leave us in any doubt as to the sources of his information. He tells us that he draws from "Memoirs of the Apostles," "which are called Gospels," "composed by the Apostles and those that followed them." In them he found written "all things concerning Jesus Christ." These "Memoirs" were read, together with the writing of the prophets, in the weekly meetings of the Christians. † Is it possible to doubt that these are the same "Gospels" which Tatian combined in his Harmony? But here they are already found in settled ecclesiastical use.

I need only cite one other witness,

PAPIAS OF HIERAPOLIS,

—the first who mentions Matthew and Mark by name. His date may be 120-130 A.D., but Dr. Sanday is disposed to carry back the extracts preserved from him to about 100 A.D. ‡ This would give them high authority indeed. That Papias knew the Fourth Gospel is rendered almost certain by his attested use of the first Epistle of John, but the extracts now in question (preserved by Eusebius) relate to the first and second Gospels. Papias had been on terms of intimacy with the immediate followers of the Apostles, possibly with John himself,§ and his object in the work from which the extracts are taken was to set down faithfully, along

*1st *Apol.* 61.—Justin's allusions to the Fourth Gospel are well set out in Dr. Stanton's *Gospels as Historical Documents*, pp. 81, *ff.* The above quotation is challenged by the critics, but is vigorously defended by Dr. Drummond.

† Cf. *1st Apol.* 66-67: *Dialogue with Trypho*, 10, 100, 103.

‡ *Fourth Gospel*, p. 251.

§ I need not touch here on the disputed questions about "the Elder John."

with his own interpretations, what he had learnt from the elders and those acquainted with them. There can be no doubt further that what Eusebius quotes from Papias about Matthew and Mark he takes to refer to our present Gospels. That, indeed, is plain on the face of it about Mark. There is a certain difficulty, as we shall immediately see, about Matthew, but, as Eusebius had the work of Papias before him, the presumption is that he was right in his understanding about the first Gospel also.

The testimonies about

MATTHEW AND MARK,

then, in brief, are, as respects Matthew, that he "composed the Oracles (*Logia*) in Hebrew, and each one interpreted them as he was able"; and, concerning Mark, that "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately all that he remembered, though he did not record in order that which was either said or done by Christ."* By "Hebrew" in the first passage, is to be understood "Aramaic." Both of the statements here made, that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Aramaic, and that Mark wrote as the disciple and interpreter of Peter, appear in all the subsequent tradition. Yet there is the difficulty that the only Gospel of Matthew we know†—the only one also in the hands of these Fathers—is in Greek, and bears no marks of being a translation. We have, accordingly, the two facts to face: first, that Matthew is said to have written his Gospel in Aramaic, and, second, that our Greek Gospel

*Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.*, III. 39.

†There is no ground for the supposition that the Jewish-Christian *Gospel of the Hebrews* was the original of our Matthew. It is, on the other hand, derived from it.

is held by all the early writers to be virtually identical with this Aramaic work of Matthew. How this is to be cleared up will be considered after. The other statement, as to the origin of Mark, has every right to credence. Mark is, in substance, Peter's Gospel.

These are voices from within the Church, but it is not different when we pass

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.

Celsus, *e.g.*, was a bitter opponent of Christianity, but he calls our Gospels "the writings of the disciples of Christ," and urges against them the usual charges of contradiction and absurdity. Marcion, a Gnostic, earlier than Justin Martyr, used what all now acknowledge to be a mutilated version of Luke. The Ebionites, in like manner, used a mutilated version of Matthew. The Gnostics were specially fond of John, and one of them wrote a commentary on the Gospel. I spoke in an earlier paper of the use of John's Gospel by Basilides.* (*c.* 125).

I need not pursue this branch of the evidence further, for, as regards dates, it is now admitted by all but extreme writers that our first three Gospels (the "Synoptics"), at any rate, fall well within

THE LIMITS OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

Harnack, *e.g.*, whose dates are probably still too late, puts Mark's Gospel between 65 and 70 A.D., Matthew's between 70 and 75, Luke's between 78 and 93. Blass, representing a yet further return to tradition, puts the composition of Luke's Gospel in 59 or 60.† Even as regards authorship we have found that Mark, Luke, and John are now being restored to their accredited authors, and Matthew is

* *Ut supra*, p. 36. Dr. Drummond contends for the natural view that Basilides himself is quoted as using the Gospel.

† *Philology of the Gospels*, p. 35.

allowed a substantial (if still insufficient) share in the composition of the Gospel that bears his name. These are long strides towards the corroboration of the tradition of the Church which Prof. Foster, while rejecting it, thus correctly represents: "According to tradition, two Gospels are by Matthew and John, who were Apostles; two others, by disciples and companions of Apostles—Mark, the companion of Peter, Luke of Paul."*

III.

Thus far I have been dealing with external evidence. On that side I believe that the case for the Gospels is irrefragable. Even of the Gospel of John—the most contested of the four—Dr. Drummond permits himself to say at the conclusion of his inquiry: "The external evidence (be it said with due respect for the Alogi) is all on one side" (p. 514).

Now the question arises—Does

INTERNAL CRITICISM

confirm or overthrow these results? Truth being one, it would be strange if it did the latter. Yet, if we take up the books of any of our critics of the newer school—of a Schmiedel, a Wernle, a Foster, a Schmidt—we find that nothing less than this is their contention. The external evidence, in their view, has hardly the weight of a feather. The books themselves must be critically examined; and when that is done, their credit is gone. The supposition that John is the work of an Apostle, or has any historical worth, is not to be entertained for a moment. The Synoptic tradition is put into the crucible, and is found to be, in part gold, but largely also base alloy. Subjective weights and measures are employed to determine what is true and

* *Finality of the Christian Religion*, p. 335.

what false. Unfortunately, there is little real agreement in the results, and one fails often to see why anything should be left at all.

A FEW SPECIMENS,

taken almost haphazard, may illustrate.

Here is Bousset.* "That Jesus was directly indicated by John as Messiah, as the Christian tradition has it, we do not believe" (p. 7). "What was Jesus' object in collecting His band of disciples? Not, at any rate, to found a community or church" (p. 60). "The stereotyped way in which the Synoptics represent Jesus as using the title 'Son of Man' is not historical. There speaks, not the earthly Jesus, but the dogmatic conviction of His followers" (p. 193) "Above all, He did not lay claim to the judgeship of the world. . . . It is true that in the narratives of our Gospels the opposite seems to be the case. But it is inconceivable that Jesus . . . should now have arrogated to Himself the judgeship of the world in place of God" (p. 203).

Foster, who closely follows Wernle, is ever on the track for *motive*. "Mark had done much to parry this thrust, yet much too little to suit those who came after him. . . . Luke cancels the mortal distress of Jesus in Gethsemane. Matthew removes every appearance of helplessness; legions of angels were at his disposal" (p. 354). "At the beginning of the discourse on righteousness, on missions, on Pharisees, there are harsh national Jewish sentiments; Jesus, the fulfiller of the law even to jot and tittle, &c. . . . In these utterances an exclusively Jewish party inimically disposed towards Paul and his work claims Jesus" (p. 378)! "The closing words concerning the last judgment do not come directly from Jesus. Jesus did not consider Himself as the Judge

*In his aforenamed book on *Jesus*.

of the world, nor would He have said that all the Gentiles were judged solely according to whether they supported the itinerant Christian brothers or not" (p. 381). The word to Peter, "Thou art Peter," &c., is not Christ's, but "is a saga of a later time, glorifying Peter" (p. 381).

N. Schmidt goes further, denying the Messiahship, and the titles "Son of Man," "Son of God," altogether.* The passage in Matt. xi. 27: "No one knoweth the Son," &c., on which Harnack founds, is rejected by this writer as "a somewhat irrelevant statement that has the appearance of a gloss." "No other passage in the Synoptic Gospels indicates that Jesus made the discovery that God is a Father, or conceived of His Fatherhood in such a manner as to lead Him to the conclusion that He alone stood to God in the relation of a true Son" (p. 151). At Cæsarea-Philippi, where Bousset and Foster see an avowal of Messiahship, Schmidt discerns a sharp rebuke to Peter for venturing to proclaim Him the Messiah! "Jesus charged His disciples not to say that He was the Messiah. He did not wish that men should believe in Him as the Messiah, and confess Him as such" (p. 277).

Enough, the reader will probably say, of this

UPSIDE-DOWN CRITICISM,

which can make anything of anything, and cuts and carves till the Gospels are perforce made to speak the language the critic desires to hear from them. It is time to turn to the real problems of the relations of the Gospels which arise from a less prejudiced consideration of their contents.

Have the Gospels any literary dependence on each other? The theory which finds acceptance at

*In his *The Prophet of Nazareth.*

present is that Mark is an original Gospel, while Matthew and Luke depend on Mark, and also on a second source—a collection of the sayings or discourses of Jesus (the *Logia*), of which the Apostle Matthew was the author. I cannot say that I feel satisfied with this now widely accepted

"TWO-SOURCE" THEORY.

I cannot readily believe that Luke would include an important Gospel like Mark's among the attempts at a narrative which his own better-ordered Gospel was to supersede (Luke i. 1); and, while it is true that there is little in Mark's Gospel not found in the other two, it is also the case that the language and style of narration in the latter are often quite different.* The hypothesis of a *Logia* source common to Matthew and Luke is likewise cumbered with great difficulties. The two Gospels often verbally agree in their reports of Christ's sayings, but in other places the language widely diverges. It is quite inexplicable why the same saying should be so differently reported, if taken from the same document.† Besides, the tradition is that Matthew wrote his *Logia* in Aramaic, while the source used by Matthew and Luke must be supposed to be in Greek.

Chiefly I feel difficulty with the theory about

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

There is no good reason for supposing that the "Oracles" (*Logia*) which Matthew is attested to have written were

* Cf. *e.g.* Mark i. 13=Matt. iv. 1-11; Mark i. 14-15 = Matt. iv. 7; Mark iii. 1.5 = Matt. xii, 10-13: Mark iii. 24-26 = Matt. 25-26; Mark iv. 35-41 = Matt. viii. 18, 23, 27; Mark v. 1-20 = Matt. viii. 28-34, &c.

† Cf. *e.g.*, Luke x. 23, 24 = Matt. xiii. 16-17; Luke xi. 11-13 = Matt. vii. 9-11; Luke xii. 4-6 = Matt. x. 28, 29; Luke xii. 22-31 = Matt. vi. 25-33 (alike, yet inexplicable variations), &c.

only a collection of the Lord's *sayings*. B. Weiss and others seem to me to have established that it must have embraced narrative matter as well.* If so, it can hardly have been other than our present Gospel, as Eusebius and the other witnesses took it to be. The statement of Papias that Matthew wrote in Hebrew (Aramaic) must in that case have arisen, either (1) from a confusion with the related *Gospel of the Hebrews*, which Papias may have mistakenly thought to be the original; or (2) from some tradition of an older draft or sketch of the Gospel in Aramaic, which the later Greek Gospel of Matthew afterwards replaced. It is in itself highly probable that such notes would be made by Matthew at an early stage; and copies and translations of these, and of the teaching of the other Apostles, may, as both Luke (i. 1) and Papias hint, have been in circulation. It is difficult to see how otherwise so accurate and well-defined a circle of sayings and narratives could have been preserved.

It is to be remembered, in further elucidation of this

COMMON BASIS

of the first three Gospels: (1) that for a considerable time the Apostles laboured together and taught in Jerusalem; (2) that Peter, as foremost spokesman, and an energetic personality, would naturally impress *his* type upon the oral narratives of Christ's sayings and doings in the primitive community (the *Mark* type); (3) that Matthew's stores, in part written, would be the chief source for the sayings and longer discourses; (4) that the instruction imparted at Jerusalem, or by the Apostles and those taught by

* Schmidt appears to me to have reason on his side in his remarks on this point, and in his remarks on the *Logia* theory generally (pp. 219-220, 227-228). He disputes the priority of Mark, and makes Matthew the oldest of the Gospels, but, of course, in its present form, late (pp. 223, 227).

them during visits to the Churches, would everywhere be made the basis of careful catechetical teaching; (5) that records of all this, more or less fragmentary, would be early in circulation. This would readily explain the Petrine type of the common narrative tradition, and the seeming dependence of Matthew, without the necessity of supposing that one Gospel copied from another, or drew from a special *Logia* source.

This, also, it seems to me, is precisely the process suggested by

LUKE'S REMARKABLE PREFACE

to his Gospel, which furnishes, in so interesting a way, a glimpse into the mode of Gospel composition in that early age. Luke is dealing, he tells us, with matters which were already "fully established" among Christians; the knowledge of which had been derived from "eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word;" in which Theophilus had already been "catechised;" of which many had already "taken in hand" to draw up narratives; regarding which the Evangelist, as "having tracêd the course of all things accurately from the first," was able to give him "certainty" (Luke i. 1-4). Could there be a much surer guarantee for the credibility of a narrative?*

IV.

We have still to glance at the most difficult of these problems in the

RELATION OF JOHN TO THE SYNOPTICS.

The slightest inspection of the Fourth Gospel shows that it is very different in style and character from the former

* It need not be said that all this which Luke tells us is perfectly compatible with his feeling that he was moved to do what he did by the Spirit of God, and with his being conscious of the Spirit's guidance in his work.

three. Yet the internal evidence of the Apostle's authorship is nearly as conclusive as the external. No one can read the Gospel fairly without perceiving that the author claims, in numerous direct and indirect ways, to be an eye-witness of the events which he describes (*e.g.*, John i. 14; xix. 35; 1 John i. 1-3). He lays emphasis on his witness, and in an appendix to the Gospel the truthfulness of his testimony is attested by others (John xxi. 24). He is quite evidently "the disciple," "the other disciple," the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John xiii. 23; xxi. 20), so often mentioned in the Gospel, but never named. The simple fact that John's name never once occurs, but that he is always referred to in this periphrastic manner, is itself convincing proof that John, and no other, is the author. In one way the very difference in style between the Fourth and the other Gospels is corroboration of this conclusion. John, according to consentient tradition, was an aged man when he wrote the Gospel. He had so often retold, and so long brooded over, the thoughts and words of Jesus, that they had become, in a manner, part of his own thought, and, in reproducing them, he necessarily did so with a subjective tinge, and in a partially paraphrastic and interpretative manner. Yet it is truly the words, thoughts, and deeds of his beloved Lord that he narrates.* His reminiscences, even of minute details of time, place, circumstance, were vivid and accurate, and he sets all down faithfully and carefully.

Yet the differences between John and his fellow-Evangelists

*Godet has said: "The discourses of the Fourth Gospel, then, do not resemble a photograph, but the extracted essence of a savoury fruit. From the change wrought in the external form of the substance, it does not follow that the slightest foreign element has been mingled with the latter" (*Com. on John*, Introd. p. 135, E.T.) The comparison has often been suggested of the reports of the teaching of Socrates by Xenophon and Plato respectively.

The Bulwark of the Gospels

SHOULD NOT BE EXAGGERATED.

The statements made on this subject by critics bent at all costs on destroying the credit of the Gospel are often quite unwarranted. John writes to convince his readers that Jesus was "the Son of God" (xx. 31), and in his prologue he declares that in Jesus the divine "Logos" had become incarnate (i. 1, 14). But the term "Logos" is never put into the mouth of Jesus Himself, who, notwithstanding His lofty claims—and none could be greater—is pictured as living a truly human life, hungering, thirsting, being wearied, sorrowing, sympathising, weeping, being troubled in soul, agonising, dying. In none of the Gospels does Jesus appear more tender, sympathetic, loving, and eager for the salvation of men. Even in the point of

THE DISCOURSES,

which are apt to appear long and controversial in comparison with the Synoptics, Dr. Drummond has shown by a careful induction that this impression is largely a mistaken one. The speeches in John are not really longer than those in Matthew, and they abound in short, concise sayings, like those in the Synoptics.* It should be remembered also that a writer like John uses the "direct" form of speech where we would use the "indirect"—a fact which gives the appearance of literal quotation, where sometimes the author is not professing to do more than give the substance of a remark or conversation in his own words.

**Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* pp. 16-20. His tables, which draw out the evidence in detail, should be studied. Professor Peake also reminds us that, "As Matthew Arnold pointed out long ago, when we look into the speeches we find a large number of sayings of the same pithy, aphoristic character as those contained in the Synoptic Gospels" (*London Quarterly Review*, October, 1905, p. 283).

But beyond these considerations, which bear directly on the form of John's narratives, there are certain others which require to be taken into account as yielding

THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

for a just estimate of this Gospel. It is necessary, *e.g.*, to remember: (1) How small a part of Christ's ministry is really covered by the Fourth Gospel—some eighteen or twenty days, perhaps, at most*; (2) that the scenes in this Gospel are mostly laid in Judæa, under quite different conditions from those of the Galilean ministry (John's narratives and those of the Synoptics, therefore, hardly ever intersect. John was acquainted with the other Gospels, and purposely refrained from reproducing matter already found in them); (3) in the few cases where the narratives *do* intersect—as in the narrative of the feeding of the five thousand (John vi. 6-13), and part of the scenes of the Passion—the resemblance is often very close; (4) that the reports of Christ's sayings and discourses in the Synoptics (in part also in John) are but notes, summaries, condensations, of what must often have been addresses of considerable duration; (5) that in the privacy of familiar intercourse with His disciples (*e.g.*, John xiii.-xvii.) Jesus would express Himself in a very different way from what He did in His popular preaching to the multitudes. The objective parabolic character of the latter would give place to a style more intimate, flowing, and tender. I conclude that there need be no hesitation in accepting the Fourth Gospel as

*See an interesting little work by Dr. Elder Cumming, *He Chose Twelve*. An analysis of John's Gospel at the close brings out that in this Gospel, "out of the three years' ministry and 33 years' life, we have [only] 18 days and their events, besides discourses." In another admirable work which should be better known, *The Days of the Son of Man*, by G. W. Macalpine, an analysis is also given, which brings out nearly the same results (pp. 7-9).

A GENUINE WORK

of the beloved disciple. Such being the general character of our four Gospels, it needs no elaboration of argument to prove how strong and reliable is the evidence they afford to the character, claims, words, deeds of the Jesus whose portrait they enshrine.

A FOURFOLD ASPECT.

If Matthew writes predominatingly for Jews, to set forth Jesus as the Messiah, Mark for Gentiles, to exhibit Him, by His wondrous works, as the Son of God, Luke, as the companion of Paul, to picture Him as the gracious Saviour, John, rising above time relations, to declare His oneness in eternity with God, it is yet the same Christ that, under these several aspects, they depict. The harmony of character is as remarkable as the variety of representation.

Of special interest is the value of the evidence which the Gospels afford to the element most impugned in the life of Jesus—

HIS MIRACLES.

That evidence is often represented as weak; rightly apprehended, it is irresistibly strong. The special fact to be kept hold of here is that behind the individual miracle there *stands the whole mass of evidence sustaining the historicity and credibility of the Gospels as a whole.* There are three main strands in this evidence for the miracles of Jesus:

(1) There is the fact that the miraculous element cannot be eliminated from the narratives of the Gospels. The miraculous is

MINUTELY AND INSEPARABLY INTERWOVEN

with the texture of the Gospels, and it is impossible to get rid of it without destroying the whole. Instead of

the miracle discrediting the narrative, the internal marks of truth in the narrative and other evidences of historicity sustain the credit of the miracle. As little can miracle be got rid of by mutilation of the text. It is a purely arbitrary procedure, *e.g.*, on the part of Wellhausen, to leave out the first two chapters of Matthew from his version of the Gospels. The account of the Nativity in Luke, again, likewise omitted by Wellhausen, is an integral part of the Gospel, exhibiting the well-known marks of that author's style.

(2) The miracles are sustained by the fact that the narratives of the ministry to which they belong rest on

FIRM APOSTOLIC TRADITION,

or, better, testimony. The story as it stands in the Gospels does not rest on the individual testimony of the author of the Gospel. He is putting down what was known and believed in the Church generally as derived from those who had been "eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word." There was a fixed tradition carefully conveyed to the Churches, and made the basis of catechetical instruction. The Gospels are the deposit of it in writing.

(3) Taking the Gospels by themselves, they rest ultimately on the

TESTIMONY OF EYE-WITNESSES.

The value of the testimony does not suffer by its being, in some cases, the testimony of the twelve (or eleven) combined. The Resurrection, *e.g.*, rests on the combined witness of all the Apostles. But in the Gospels we have individual testimony also. Few now doubt that at least the ground-stock of Matthew is from the pen of that Apostle, and we have seen reason to believe that the whole Gospel is so. Even if *Logia* are assumed, it is certain that these embraced narrative elements. Mark,

it has been seen, is really the Gospel of Peter, whose estimony to the facts of Christ's ministry the Evangelist preserves. Luke, in his preface, carries us back to eye-witnesses as the source of his information. In John's Gospel, finally, we have the testimony of an eye-witness. All these witnesses include miracle in what they report of the life of Jesus. The miracles themselves have a congruity with the character of Christ, and the ends of His ministry, which give them a claim upon our faith.

V.

Only one point more, and I leave the subject. It relates to the alleged falsification by history of Christ's repeated predictions of His

RETURN IN GLORY.

These also form an essential part of the Gospel testimony about Jesus, and cannot be separated from it. Yet well nigh nineteen centuries have passed, and the Lord has not returned yet. As Prof. Huxley puts the point in one of his essays:* "One thing is quite certain: if that belief in the speedy second coming of the Messiah, which was shared by all parties in the Primitive Church, whether Nazarene or Pauline, which Jesus is made to prophesy, over and over again, in the Synoptic Gospels, and which dominated the life of Christians during the first century after the Crucifixion; if He believed and taught that, then assuredly He was under an illusion, and He is responsible for that which the mere effluxion of time has demonstrated to be a prodigious error."*

I do not stay to discuss the many subsidiary questions that arise here—whether, *e.g.*, the *Parousia* of Christ was conceived of by Him as a single event, or not, rather, as a process, with many stages, culminating in His Personal

**Agnosticism: A Rejoinder.*

Return at the end of the age. I accept the fact that the Personal Return of the Lord was clearly predicted by Himself in many passages, and that in the New Testament it appears throughout as the great

IMPENDING EVENT OF THE FUTURE,

for which His people are exhorted to watch and wait; which, therefore, must ever, if they truly look for it, be near to them in spirit. And I make on the predictions of this great event but two remarks:—(1) It is repeatedly declared, and by none more emphatically than by Jesus Himself that

THE "TIMES AND SEASONS"

of these final events were kept by the Father in His own power, and were not made known to man (Acts i. 7). Even in Matt. xxiv. Jesus distinguishes clearly between "these (nearer) things," which were to be fulfilled in that generation (ver. 34), and "that day and hour," of which He says that no man knoweth, neither the angels, nor even the Son (ver. 36, Mark xiii. 32). (2) Has

THE CHURCH ITSELF NO RESPONSIBILITY

for the delay in the Lord's coming? This is an aspect of the subject often overlooked. Prophecy is conditional (Cf. Jer. xviii. 7-10, &c.). From the point of view of the absolute knowledge of the Father, the time of the Advent (like the day of one's own death) is fixed; but relatively and humanly we can do much either to hasten or retard the fulfilment of God's promises, and the triumph of His Kingdom. The Westminster Catechism interprets the second petition in the Lord's Prayer as a prayer that "the Kingdom of grace may be advanced, and the Kingdom of glory may be hastened." But if the Kingdom of glory

may be hastened, may it not also be kept back? Had the Church been more faithful in the Apostolic and in subsequent ages, would the consummation not have been nearer? Would it not have been here? This is, to my mind, an all-important fact to be considered when we ask the question—Why has the Lord not come?

IX

Oppositions of Science

Oppositions of Science

IT is taken for granted in many quarters that there is a wide and growing gulf between science and Christian faith. This impression, fostered by such books as Draper's *Conflict Between Religion and Science*, White's *Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, and now Foster's *Finality of the Christian Religion*, is commonly accompanied by the belief, often by the bold assertion, that the general attitude of scientific men is one of alienation from Christianity. While criticism has been undermining belief in the Bible from within, science, it is assumed, has been demonstrating its irreconcilability with the actual constitution of things in the outward world.

The whole

ARRAY OF THE SCIENCES

is brought in as witness against the Bible. The Copernican astronomy, it is alleged, has destroyed its view of the cosmos; geology has disproved its cosmogony, and view of the age of the earth; anthropology has similarly confuted its teaching on the age of man; evolution has taken the ground from its belief in Eden, and a pure beginning of the race. Once it is realised, say the objectors, that the earth is not the centre of the universe, but a mere speck in the infinity of worlds; that the world existed for untold ages before man's advent; that man himself is a slow development from inferior

forms, and appeared as far back as 100,000, 200,000 or 500,000 years ago; that his original condition was one of brutishness, rising into savagery, then, after long struggling, into civilisation, the whole scheme of Christianity, based on the idea that our planet was the peculiar scene of God's revelations, of the fall and redemption of man, and of the incarnation of God's Son for the purposes of that redemption, sinks in irretrievable ruin. Advancing knowledge has given it its death-blow.

I.

It may be of some service if I attempt in this paper to show that such statements are

EXTREMELY WIDE OF THE MARK,

and that neither Christianity nor the Bible are in the slightest danger from any results that genuine science has succeeded in establishing. There are certain things, however, which it is desirable I should say at the outset on this alleged conflict between the Christian religion and science.

The first is, that much which passes under the name of "science" is not science at all, but

CRUDE AND UNWARRANTED SPECULATION,

and often extremely bad philosophy. This is peculiarly true of that remarkable mixture of scientific facts, rash theorising, and bad metaphysics met with in the works of the Jena *savant* Haeckel recently popularised among us. Haeckel sets himself to disprove, on scientific grounds, the cardinal religious ideas of God, the soul, immortality; but the weapons by which he assails these ideas are not derived from anything properly called science, but from a semi-materialistic theory of "Monism"—a so-called

"law of substance"—which scarcely anyone possessed of a smattering of philosophic knowledge at the present day would discredit himself by countenancing. It is a singular fact that, by confession of his own pages, most of Haeckel's chief authorities—Virchow, Du Bois-Reymond, Wundt, Romanes, &c.—later in life deserted him, and became advocates of an opposite and spiritualistic interpretation of the universe—Romanes becoming decidedly Christian. Wundt, in the second edition of his work on *Human and Animal Psychology* declared that the first edition, in which he had advocated views like Haeckel's, "weighed on him as a kind of crime, from which he longed to free himself as soon as possible."

A second thing I desire to observe is, that the alleged divorce between scientific thought and Christian belief in our own time is, to say the least,

A GROSS EXAGGERATION.

Multitudes of scientific men themselves, if they were consulted, would resent the imputation. I give two illustrations. When, many years ago (1879), Mr. Froude had indulged in the usual declamation about "the ablest," "the most advanced," "the best scientific thinkers" having abandoned Christianity, and even theistic belief, the late Professor Tait, of Edinburgh, as distinguished a representative of physical science as then lived, replied in an article in the *International Review* with "a prompt and decided 'No!'" He asked of any competent authority, who were the "advanced," the "best," and the "ablest" scientific thinkers of the immediate past, or of that time, and, after giving his list of those whom he considered such, he declared them to be on the side of faith. He summed up: "The assumed incompatibility of religion and science has been so often and confidently

asserted in recent times, that it has come . . . to be taken for granted by the writers of leading articles, &c.; and it is, of course, perpetually thrust before their too trusting readers. But the whole thing is a mistake, and a mistake so grave that no truly scientific man . . . runs, in Britain at least, the smallest risk of making it. . . . With a few, and these very singular, exceptions, the true scientific men and true theologians of the present day have not found themselves under the necessity of quarrelling." Lord Kelvin has recently spoken in the same strain for himself and others.

My other example is from the late George G. Romanes, who, after a long eclipse of faith, died a devout believer, in full communion with the Church of England. In his posthumously published *Thoughts on Religion*, he has left the avowal that one thing which specially impressed him was the large number of

CHRISTIAN MEN OF SCIENTIFIC ATTAINMENTS

in his own University of Cambridge. "The curious thing," he says, "is that all the most illustrious names were ranged on the side of orthodoxy. Sir W. Thomson, Sir George Stokes, Professors Tait, Adams, Clerk Maxwell, and Bayley—not to mention a number of lesser lights, such as Routh, Todhunter, Ferrers, &c.—were all avowed Christians" (p. 137). It may be thought, perhaps, that it is different now. Romanes himself, with his return to faith, is an instance to the contrary. But, generally, I should be disposed to say that the conditions were less favourable to faith a quarter of a century ago than they are in the more spiritual atmosphere of to-day. I have the privilege of the acquaintance of many professors and teachers of science, and the majority of them are Christian men.

There is yet another fact which it is important I should

emphasise. The assumption commonly made in discussions of this sort is that, in the conflicts of science and religion, it is invariably science that comes off the victor. This, however, is a proposition which needs much qualification. It would be truer to say that, in the alleged conflicts of science and religion, the victory is

SELDOM, OR NEVER, ALL ON ONE SIDE.

If theology makes mistakes, so assuredly does science. Progress has been accomplished, in science as in theology, by the gradual unlearning of errors and discarding of defective theories for new and more adequate ones. If theologians looked askance on Copernican astronomy or on Darwinian theories of evolution they were not alone in this; the science of their time did the same. The foolish attacks of theologians on science have been more than paralleled by the foolish attacks of scientific men on theology.

What is more to the point, the opposition of religion to new scientific theories has not always been wholly wrong. It will be seen as we proceed that many of the theories to which defenders of religion took exception were really in their original form liable to objection, and have since, by the progress of science itself, been greatly modified. This is specially true of the Darwinian theory of evolution, and of the anthropological speculations connected with it. Theologians were not unjustified in the strictures they passed on the specific Darwinian theory, with its apotheosis of fortuity. In the progress of discussion it is not too much to say that the objections they took to the sufficiency of that theory have in the main been found valid.

One further caution I would venture to give, viz., that in science, as in criticism, it is well not to allow the mind to be overborne by the mere weight of

EXPERT OPINION.

Experts may err, and do err, and their judgments often seriously conflict. Examples might easily be given of the danger of trusting too implicitly to untested assertions even in plain matters of fact.

II.

Looking now, first, at the bearings of science on religion

ON THE WIDE SCALE,

can we say that science has destroyed any of the great fundamental ideas of the religion of the Bible—God, the soul, the future life, moral and spiritual government of the world—or has it not rather brought manifold confirmations to these ideas? Has it succeeded, *e.g.*, in breaking down the barrier between the spiritual and the material, the vital and the non-vital, the free and the necessitated, or in banishing from the interpretation of nature the ideas of creative power and of wise and purposeful action? Everyone acquainted with the best scientific thought knows that the opposite is the case. The trend at present is all in the direction of

A SPIRITUALISTIC INTERPRETATION

of nature. The idea of "teleology" (ends, design, final cause) has had a remarkable revival in connection with evolutionism, in opposition to "naturalistic" theories. Prof. Foster may be our witness here, for he devotes a whole chapter of his book to illustration of the fact, and what he says is only the echo of what the men of insight are proclaiming everywhere.* The attempts at a

*Ch. vi. of Professor Foster's work is entitled "The Naturalistic and the Religious View of the World." It is really largely indebted to a German work, by Rudolf Otto, mentioned below, *Naturalistiche und Religöse Weltansicht.* [This book is now translated in the "Crown Theological Library" under the title, *Naturalism and Religion.*]

mechanical or merely chemical explanation of "life" have broken down utterly.* The declaration in May, 1903, of Lord Kelvin—than whom no man stands higher in physical and mathematical science—that science not only did not deny, but positively affirmed, the reality of creative power and directive intelligence, will long be remembered.

Take the question of

THE SOUL AND THE FUTURE LIFE.

Science, of course, cannot make positive assertions on immortality, but it lends at least powerful support to that belief in the distinction which every advance in deeper knowledge of ourselves enables us to make between spiritual mind and material brain—between our souls and the corporeal organism which meanwhile they inhabit. I leave aside the strange region explored by "Psychical Research," and keep to open, everyday facts of common experience. And here, if one thing emerges more clearly than another, it is the fallacy of a materialistic explanation of mental phenomena, and the truth of the impassable distinction between mind and brain. I will not use my own words, but will quote those of one of the acutest of recent German writers,

RUDOLF OTTO,

on the subject. "Consciousness, thought," he says, "nay, the humblest feeling of pleasure or pain, or the simplest sensuous perception, are nothing that can be compared with 'matter and force,' with movements of parts of masses. They are a foreign, perfectly inexplicable guest in this world of matter, molecules, and elements. Even if we could follow most precisely and

*See an article on "The Origin of Living Organisms," by Professor J. Arthur Thomson, in the *London Quarterly Review*, October 1906.

minutely the play of the nervous processes with which feeling, consciousness, pain, or pleasure are connected, if we could make our brain transparent, and magnify its cells to houses, so that, wandering among them and glancing around, we could count and watch all that takes place, and follow even the dance of the molecules, we should never see 'pain,' 'pleasure,' 'thought,' but always only bodies and their movements. A thought, say the recognition that $2 \times 2 = 4$, is not long or broad, not above or below, not to be measured or weighed by inches or pounds like matter . . . but is something entirely different, which must be known from inner experience, yet is known from this far better and more immediately than anything else, and which can absolutely be compared with nothing but itself." *

Is it, then, in the idea of

A REIGN OF LAW

that science strikes athwart belief in a revelation from God, undeniably involving miraculous elements? So, as we saw before, think Prof. Foster and a multitude of others in these times; but their confident assertion that law excludes miracle would not have been endorsed by such thinkers as Prof. Huxley or J. S. Mill, and is without justification in either science or reason. The Bible also recognises law in nature. "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven. . . Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They abide this day according to Thine ordinances; for all things are Thy servants" (Ps. cxix. 89). But law is God's servant, not His master; and nothing prevents His acting above, without, or beyond it, if the highest ends of His government call for such action.

We may go further, and say that in the

* In the work above referred to, *Nat. und Rel. Weltansicht*, pp. 233-4. [E. T., p. 300.]

science reveals to us facts which rational thought can only construe as "miracles." Nature's course is marked by the breaking forth of ever new powers—as in the transition from inorganic to organic—and the founding of higher orders of existence, for the explanation of which we are compelled to go directly back to the Central Creative Cause.* In another way science does something to remove the offence of miracle by its constant discoveries of the depths of hidden powers in nature of which Omnipotence can avail itself for the accomplishment of its purposes—thus softening the transition from natural to supernatural. But no powers of mere nature can avail for the restoring of sight to the totally blind, the instantaneous cleansing of the flesh of a leper, or the raising of the dead to life, so that the idea of miracle, in the stricter sense, remains. Yet such acts are neither beyond the power of God, nor unworthy of Him, if sufficiently weighty reasons, of which He alone can judge, are present for its exercise.

There is a further difficulty connected with law on which a word—and it can only be a word—may here be said. Does not a reign of law, it may be asked, at the very least, exclude

SPECIAL PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER,

both elements in the religious conception of the Bible? The difficulty is to many minds a very real one; yet help, I think, may be got from considering that laws and forces

*Sabatier has said: "At each step nature surpasses itself by a mysterious creation that resembles a true miracle in relation to an inferior stage," and infers that "in Nature there is a hidden force, an incommensurable 'potential energy,' an ever-open unexhausted fount of apparitions, at once magnificent and unexpected."—*Phil of Rel.*, p. 84. Call this Power "God," and the analogy with miracle is complete.

of nature of themselves explain nothing—apart, that is, from the way in which these laws and forces are combined, and co-operate to the production of special results. As the Apostle puts it, all things "work together" for good to them that love God (Rom. viii. 28). To borrow a phrase for which J. S. Mill acknowledges his indebtedness to Dr. Thomas Chalmers—in order to explain nature as we find it, we need to take account, not only of "laws," but of the "collocation" of laws. A machine—*e.g.*, a printing-press—produces its results through the operation of laws. Yet the laws would accomplish nothing were it not that the machine is put together in a certain way, and that the forces at work in it are regulated and directed to a certain end. Laws alone, therefore, do not explain the universe; there is needed plan, direction, guidance; there is needed the mind and the hand behind the machine—the combination of laws and forces—guiding it in the work it has to do. When it is remembered that the mind behind Nature—the mind which has the whole plan at every instant before it—is that of the infinitely wise Author of Nature Himself, it will be seen what large room there is for a providence as special as Jesus teaches us to believe in (Matt. vi. 30-34, x. 29-30), a prayer as effective as His promises are great (Matt. vii. 7-11, Mark xi. 24, Luke xviii. 1-7, John xiv. 13, 14).

III.

From these general considerations on the scientific conception of nature we are brought back to the difficulties presumed to arise from

THE SPECIAL SCIENCES,

some of the chief of which may now receive attention. The result, I believe, will be to show that there is as little

reason to fear for the Bible in this special sphere as in the general.

I mentioned in the opening paper that few Christians are now troubled in mind, even in the least degree, by the stupendous enlargement of our knowledge of the physical universe through the discoveries of astronomy. Yet there are scientific men, with scholars in other departments, who seriously persuade themselves that the acceptance of

THE COPERNICAN SYSTEM

is absolutely fatal to the ordinary Christian scheme. "The earth," says Professor Foster, "is but an ordinary satellite of a planet which is itself only a star among numberless stars, a mere vanishing point in the illimitable All. This grain of sand on the shore of the infinite sea—how could centrality and supremacy be still accorded to it? And that which takes place upon its surface—how could it be decisive of the fate of the shoreless All?" (p. 165).* How could such an insignificant point in space be conceived of as the theatre of the grand divine drama of Incarnation and Redemption?

This is the so-called

"ASTRONOMICAL OBJECTION"

to which Dr. Chalmers sought to reply in his *Astronomical Discourses*, and which has so often been replied to since. It was an objection keenly felt at first by believers in the old Ptolemaic astronomy, which made the earth to be the centre of the universe. Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, John Owen, John Wesley even, all opposed the new doctrine as contrary to Scripture. They were mistaken. It has now long been recognised that what enlarges our

* It is not easy to see how, with his own view of the Christian religion and of God's great and final revelation to the world in Christ, Dr. Foster is in much better case than others for meeting this objection, in his eyes, so formidable.

thoughts of God's universe enlarges our thoughts of God Himself. It has come to be perceived that these good men made

A WRONG USE OF SCRIPTURE,

and that it is no part of the function of the Bible to anticipate modern physical discoveries. The Bible is no manual of sixteenth or twentieth century astronomy, but speaks of the world and of natural appearances from the point of view of the ordinary observer, as, indeed, we ourselves do when we speak of the sun rising and setting, and of the movements of the moon and stars across the heavens. Does anyone now dream, *e.g.*, of interpreting the language of the Bible in the 19th Psalm in any other way? The Copernican discovery helped men to get the right point of view in relation to the Bible, as well as the right point of view in the relation of the earth to the sun.

But does not the Copernican system, in itself, it may be said, conflict with the Biblical teaching on man's place in the universe, and with God's great love for him, and care for him in his salvation? I do not think that, once

THE TRUE STATE OF THE CASE

was clearly grasped, Christian people in any great numbers have ever felt that it did. It is to be remembered that, even when the world was believed to be the centre of creation, man was not thought of as the only intelligent being in the universe. Beyond this visible system were the heavens of heavens, peopled with innumerable hosts of spiritual intelligences, "thrones, dominions, principalities, powers," standing, many of them, in the immediate light of God's presence. The change was not very great when the visible universe also was thought of as possibly tenanted by rational beings more nearly resembling man himself. What, as regards the main fact, does it matter, even if it were so? As I have put the point elsewhere

—"Be the physical magnitude of the universe what it may, it remains the fact that on this little planet life has effloresced into reason ; that we have here

A RACE OF RATIONAL BEINGS

who bear God's image, and are capable of knowing, loving, and obeying Him. . . . Even supposing that there were other inhabited worlds, or any number of them, this does not detract from the soul's value in this world. Mind, if it has the powers we know it has, is not less great because other minds may exist elsewhere. Man is not less great because he is not alone great."* It does not exalt, but really derogates from, the perfection of God to suppose that He will love man less, or do less for his salvation, because the universe holds other objects of His love and care. Is it not the part of the Good Shepherd to leave the ninety-and-nine, and seek out the one lost sheep (Luke xv. 3-7) ?

This alone is sufficient to meet the objection, but science itself now forces on us another question of surprising import. Is it, after all, the case that the universe is infinite in extent, and that it

TEEMS WITH WORLDS

peopled with intelligences, like to, or greater than, our own ? So, on *a priori* grounds, it is often supposed ; but those who have read Dr. A. R. Wallace's recent book, *Man's Place in the Universe*, will know how much courage it takes to answer that question in the affirmative. Dr. Wallace's book is nothing less than the reaffirmation of the thesis, on what claim to be grounds of "the new astronomy," that our earth—or rather the solar system of which it forms a part—is situated somewhere at or near the centre of the stellar universe, shown by him to be

**Christian View of God and the World*, p. 325.

limited in extent; and that, according to every probability, the inhabitants of this planet are the only rational intelligences in the worlds the telescope reveals. The book has been criticised on astronomical and other grounds; but, on the whole, the author seems to have made out his case that our system is situated in the medial plane of the Milky Way, and near the centre of it, and that the constitution and conditions of the other planets of our system, and of the more distant parts of the universe now known to us by the telescope and spectroscope, are entirely unfavourable to the idea of their being the abodes of intelligent life.* If such

"GEOCENTRIC" SPECULATIONS

are admitted, what becomes of the "astronomical objection"? Science throws an altogether unexpected weight into the scale against its cogency.

IV.

The lesson taught as to the right use of Scripture by the astronomical difficulty received new application and accentuation in the controversy that arose in last century as to the bearing on the

BIBLICAL ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION

of the discoveries of geology. The law applies here also that the Bible is not designed to anticipate the discoveries of nineteenth century science, but speaks of natural things as they lie open to the eye of the ordinary observer, and

*Cf. interesting critical articles on Dr. Wallace's book in the *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1904; *Church Quarterly Review*, July, 1904; and the *London Quarterly Review*, January, 1904. I had myself urged like considerations in my *Christian View of God*, pp. 324-5. Cf. Note, pp. 468-70 (8th edition).

uses the language that would be understood by readers of its own time. Gen. i. says, "God created," but leaves it open to any subsequent discovery to show the *method* of His creation. This Genesis record is utterly unlike any other cosmogony that ever was given. Its inspiration is attested by its monotheistic character, its sublimity of thought and style, and its truth of representation in essential points. Comparison with the debased, polytheistic creation-legend of Babylonia only brings out more forcibly the unchallengeable superiority of the Biblical account. Its intention is primarily to be the vehicle of the great religious ideas that inform it ; yet, so true is the insight yielded by

THE SPIRIT OF REVELATION,

that the writer or seer is able really to seize the great stadia in the process of creation, and to represent these in a way which conveys a practically accurate conception of them to men's minds. Proof of this is hardly needed when we have a certificate to the fact from no less redoubtable an authority than Haeckel himself. He speaks of "the simple and natural chain of ideas which runs through" the Mosaic account, emphasises how "two great and fundamental ideas, common also to the non-miraculous theory of development, meet us in the Mosaic hypothesis of creation with surprising clearness and simplicity—the idea of separation or *differentiation*, and the idea of progressive development or *perfecting*," and bestows his "just and sincere admiration on the Jewish law-giver's grand insight into nature, and his simple and natural hypothesis of creation."*

The tribute thus paid is just. I do not touch on the

HARMONIES OF GENESIS AND GEOLOGY,

but only ask the reader to consider if it would have been

**History of Creation*, I., pp. 37-8 (E.T.)

possible to construct such parallels as we have, for instance, in Hugh Miller's *Testimony of the Rocks*, had there not been at least very remarkable general resemblances to go upon. To my own mind the general harmony does seem very striking. I quote again words of my own—"The dark watery waste over which the Spirit broods with vivifying power, the advent of light, the formation of an atmosphere or sky capable of sustaining the clouds above it, the settling of the great outlines of the continents and seas, the clothing of the dry land with abundant vegetation, the adjustment of the earth's relation to sun and moon as the visible rulers of its day and night, the production of the great sea monsters and reptile-like creatures and birds, the peopling of the earth with four-footed beasts and cattle, last of all, the advent of man—is there so much of all this which science requires us to cancel?"*

Even with regard to

THE "DAYS"

—the duration of time involved—there is no insuperable difficulty. The writer may very well have intended symbolically or pictorially to represent the Creation as a great Week of work, ending with the Creator's Sabbath rest. It seems to me, however, more probable, in view of the fact that days of twenty-four hours do not begin to run till the appointment of the sun on the fourth day (Gen. i. 14), that he did not intend to affix a precise length to his Creation "days." These, therefore, may be allowed to represent long periods of duration. This view was taken, on exegetical grounds alone, by Christian writers long before geology was heard of.†

* *Christian View of God*, p. 421.

† *E.g.* by Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XI., 6-7; "Of what fashion these days were, it is exceedingly hard or altogether impossible to think, much more to speak," &c.

But suppose it granted that the difficulty is largely past in regard to the age of the earth, is there not still a serious obstacle to the acceptance of the Bible's teaching in the declarations of science on the extreme

ANTIQUITY OF MAN?

If man's appearance on the earth is to be carried back 100,000 or 200,000 years, or even farther, how does this fit in with the Bible's account of his creation, apparently some 6,000 years ago?

A preliminary inquiry would be, Is it clear that man's existence needs to be carried back so far? I prefer, however, to look at the matter first on its Biblical side. I leave to those who care for them speculations on "pre-Adamic" man and the like, and accept for myself what I take to be the plain teaching of Scripture, that man, made in God's image, was the last of the Creator's works (Gen. i. 26, 27), and that the whole race of human beings has sprung from "Adam," the first created man (Gen. iii. 20). How is the date usually assigned to this event to be reconciled with the alleged facts of anthropology?

The honest answer to this question must be, It cannot be reconciled? Apart from anthropology altogether, the course of discovery in Babylonia and Egypt has been such as to show that man existed on the earth in a state of civilisation

MANY MILLENNIUMS EARLIER

than was formerly believed. The Bible itself, however, is not thereby discredited, but only the human chronologies based on it—as it has proved, mistakenly. The Bible gives, indeed, summaries of early human history, and genealogical tables extending in apparently unbroken line from Adam to Abraham and Moses. But just here the fallacy comes in. For, setting mythical explanations

aside, who is to guarantee that these genealogies are or were ever intended to be complete, or that they do not in some cases represent heads of families, or clan-fathers, or typical links in a long chain of descent, the intermediate links of which are dropped out? The

HIGHLY TECHNICAL MANNER

in which genealogies were commonly constructed (Cf. the list of the seventy who went down with Jacob to Egypt, Gen. xlvi., which, with other anomalies, includes Jacob himself, and the two sons of Joseph, born in Egypt, ver. 20, in the number) * the frequent mingling of clan or tribal names with personal (as obviously in Gen. x. xi.), the compression of lists by omission of names (as in Christ's genealogy in Matt. i. where three names are omitted between Joram and Uzziah, ver. 8), show conclusively that it is impossible to use such genealogies as we have in Gen. v. and xi. as a basis for accurate chronological reckoning. So obvious is this on reflection that the most conservative Biblical students seem now agreed that the early genealogies must be interpreted with great latitude, and that nothing stands in the way of a large extension of the period of man's existence on the earth, if such should prove to be required.†

It does not follow, however, that the

EXTRAVAGANT CLAIMS

put forth in certain scientific quarters for man's antiquity are offhand to be accepted. There are the best reasons

* Cf. my *Problem of the O.T.*, p. 367.

† I need instance only the Princeton theologians Dr. A. A. Hodge, in his *Outlines of Theology* (Edit. 1879), p. 297; Dr. W. H. Green, in a striking article in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for April, 1890, in which the whole subject is discussed; Dr. J. D. Davis in Art. "Chronology" in his *Dict. of the Bible*. Cf. also Bishop Ellicott's *O. T. Com. for English Readers*, I., pp. 33-35, &c.

for not accepting them. The older estimates of geological time, generally, have had to be enormously retrenched, and one by one the criteria relied on to prove man's extreme antiquity have been shown not to be reliable. The assumption of Tertiary (even of Miocene or Pliocene) man may, in the present state of the evidence, be dismissed from consideration. The question of man's age now resolves itself pretty much into that of man's relation to the glacial period (pre-glacial, inter-glacial, post-glacial), and on this experts are far from agreed. Two things seem to myself fairly well ascertained—first, that the earliest certain traces of man are towards the close of the glacial period, and, second, that the close of this period, and, with it, the

ADVENT OF MAN

are much more recent than was some time ago imagined. There seems good and constantly accumulating evidence that, in America at least (the conditions in Europe were probably not widely dissimilar), the glacial age closed not more than from 7,000 to 10,000 years ago. This brings the age of man within quite reasonable limits.

The evidence on these points, so far as I know it, I have set forth in a recent book,* and I need not here repeat it. I only observe, in illustration of the first, that in the latest book I have seen on the subject—that on *North America*, by I. C. Russell, Professor of Geology in the University of Michigan (1904)—it is very confidently stated that "we find no authentic and well-attested evidence of the presence of man in America, either previous to or during the glacial period . . . all the geological evidence thus far gathered bearing on the antiquity of man in America points to the conclusion that he came after the glacial epoch" (p. 362). The case

*Cf. my volume on *God's Image in Man and Its Defacement.*

does not seem to be very different in England, and probably is not on the Continent of Europe either.

In this connection many authorities, as Prestwich, Howarth, the late Duke of Argyll, Dawson, G. F. Wright, &c., think that geology proves an extensive post-glacial submergence, after the advent of man, which they relate with

THE NOACHIAN DELUGE.

Sir Henry Howarth says: "I do not see how the historian, the archæologist, and the palæontologist can avoid making this conclusion in future a prime factor in their discussions, and I venture to think that before long it will be accepted as unanswerable."*

V.

What now, finally, is to be said of the

BRUTE ORIGIN OF MAN?

Has evolution not demonstrated that man is a slow development from the ape,† that his original condition was one of unrelieved animalism, and that his first appearance on earth must be put back countless ages—perhaps to Eocene times—to allow of his making the advances he has done? If so, what becomes of his

*_The Mammoth and the Flood_, p. 463. Cf. Argyll's _Geology and the Deluge_, 1885; Arts. by G. F. Wright in _Bibliotheca Sacra_, 1902. &c.

†Haeckel writes:—"I have given fully in my _History of Creation_ the weighty reasons for claiming this descent of man from the anthropoid apes." . . . "It is, therefore, established beyond question for all impartial scientific inquiry that the human race comes directly from the apes of the old world." . . . "The resistance to the theory of a descent from the apes is clearly due in most cases to feeling rather than to reason."—(_Evolution of Man_, Pop. Edit., pp. 264, 352).

being made in the image of God, as Scripture affirms, and of his fall from innocence in Eden? If his primitive condition was not one of innocent simplicity, what becomes of the whole Scripture doctrine of sin? These are grave questions, but I believe that, without contravening any established scientific facts, a satisfactory answer can be given to them.

There is no need for challenging the general

DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION,

supported as that is by many evidences. But, as every scientific man knows, evolution and the Darwinian theory of evolution are very distinct things. The former may be accepted and the latter rejected. Darwinism is, in fact, at the present moment being largely superseded by a type of evolution of a quite different stamp. This "newer evolution," as it is sometimes called, denies the sufficiency of the Darwinian theory of natural selection acting on fortuitous variations: seeks the causes of organic development chiefly within the organism; affirms purpose and design; above all, challenges the view that new species originate by slow and insensible variations out of others, and lays the stress on "sudden changes," "abrupt mutations," the rapid "breaking up" of existing types, and appearance of new and higher forms. Professor Foster, in his book already frequently quoted, gives some account of it, as I myself had done in my book on *God's Image in Man,* and goes so far as to say that "it sets aside Darwinism as an overcome hypothesis" (p. 235).*

It is obvious that if this new theory of

"SALTATORY" OR "MUTATIONAL" EVOLUTION

*I have pointed out that Prof. Foster owes much to Rudolf Otto, whose papers on the subject I frequently refer to in the Notes to my own book. [These able papers are now republished in the volume previously alluded to. Cf. E.T. chaps. iv. to vii.]

is accepted it does away at a stroke with nearly all the difficulties connected with the origin of man. It involves a revolution in the way of conceiving the evolutionary process at once as regards the time required, the nature of the forces employed, and the need of supposing minute gradations between the lower and higher forms. In man's case there is no longer need for supposing a slow and gradual ascent from ape to true man; the "leap," when the proper time comes, may be taken with all the suddenness needed to introduce the new being, with his distinctive attributes, upon the scene. Neither is there any need for picturing man, on his first appearance, as a semi-animal, the subject of brute impulse and unregulated passion; his nature may have been internally harmonious, with possibilities of sinless development, which only his own free act annulled. Room is given on this view for

A DOCTRINE OF SIN

—both individual and racial—such as Scripture affirms and requires as the basis of its doctrine of redemption, and as experience so abundantly ratifies.

In corroboration of the view now presented of the origin of man and in opposition to the Darwinian and Haeckelian theories of the descent of man, two all-important facts may be briefly adverted to.

The first is the continued

ABSENCE OF ALL REAL MIDDLE LINKS

between man and his hypothetical ape-ancestor. The Miocene "Dryopithecus" is now generally given up, and hope is chiefly rested on the remains of the supposed "Ape-Man" (*Pithecanthropus Erectus*)—roof of a skull, some teeth, a thigh-bone—discovered in 1892-4 by Dubois, a Dutch doctor in Java. But scientific opinion steadily tends to the rejection of this also as a true intermediate form. At

an Anthropological Congress, held at Lindau in September, 1899, Dr. Bumüller read a paper in which he declared that the supposed "Pithecanthropus" is nothing but a gibbon, as Virchow surmised from the first. Last year an eminent anatomist, Prof. J. Kollmann, of Basel, contributed to a scientific magazine (*Globus*) an elaborate article on the Descent of Man. In this he discusses the Java specimen, and rejects it as a middle link between man and the apes.* More than this he holds, and argues for, the view that man's line of descent is not through the larger anthropoid apes at all—some anthropologists contend, not through apes of any kind! Of course, if this is true, the whole question falls to the ground.

The second fact is that

THE OLDEST SKULLS

yet discovered do not afford support to the theory of the slow ascent of man from the ape. Some of them, as the Engis and Cro-magnon skulls, are of excellent brain capacity; others, as the Neanderthal, Canstadt, and Spy skulls, are more degraded. A recent discovery (1900) of a skull of a diluvial man in Krapina, in Croatia, of the Neanderthal type (with differences), adds interest to the problem. All these skulls are truly human, and can be paralleled by existing races. Huxley, in his work on *Man's Place in Nature*, in 1879, affirmed of the Neanderthal skull that it could in no sense be regarded as intermediate between man and the ape, and in an article in *The Nineteenth Century*, 1900 (pp. 750 ff), he reaffirms, with slight qualifications, his former verdicts. He

*He adheres to the view he expressed at a Berlin Congress that the Javan specimen is, indeed, a highly interesting ape of the great group of the anthropoids, but cannot be regarded as a transitional form to man. An account of this article was given in the *Westminster Gazette* for August 30, 1906. I quote from the article itself.

endorses the words of M. Fraipont: "Between the man of Spy and an existing anthropoid ape there lies an abyss." Prof. Kollmann is of opinion that the better-formed skulls are the older.

I would only add that, so far as history has any voice in this matter, it does not confirm the idea of a gradual ascent of man from lowest barbarism. The further we push back

THE ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS

we find still true man, in all the plentitude of his powers, and possessed of arts, cities, culture, and religion.

On the whole, therefore, we may still affirm without mistrust the old genealogy, which alone answers to the facts of man's nature—". . . the son of Adam, the son of God" (Luke iii. 38).

VI

To this discussion of the general relation of religion to the sciences, I may, in conclusion, append a few words on the objection sometimes raised to the Gospels in the name of science on the subject of

DEMON-POSSESSION.

Professor Huxley, who may speak for all, puts the matter in his usual strong way thus:—"If Jesus taught the demonological system involved in the Gadarene story—if a belief in that system formed a part of the spiritual convictions in which He lived and died—then I, for my part, unhesitatingly refuse belief in that teaching, and deny the reality of those spiritual convictions."* In

* Essay on *Agnosticism and Christianity*.

strictness, as, indeed, Professor Huxley occasionally admits, the question is not one of science at all*, for the existence and operation of a spiritual kingdom of evil lies beyond the province of a science of nature altogether. On the point of fact, however, many feel as Professor Huxley did on demoniacal possession, and resort to theories of "accommodation," or to Kenotic views of the limitations of our Lord's human knowledge, to get rid of the difficulty.

It seems to me, on the other hand, that, if Jesus stood in the spiritual *rapport* with

THE INVISIBLE WORLD,

which the Gospels declare He did, this is precisely one of the things on which it is impossible that He could be mistaken. It is granted that Jesus believed in an evil spiritual world, and in an "Evil One," who was its prince and ruler. I accept the belief on His authority and because I think it not unreasonable in itself, and borne out by many facts in experience and history.† I am not at all prepared to affirm that demoniacal possession in the strict sense does not yet exist. I believe that many things could be adduced to show that it does. I take the Gospels, accordingly, as they are on this point, without attempting to explain their testimony away.‡ It is

* He repeatedly declares in the course of his discussion with Dr Wace that he has "no *a priori* objection to offer," that "for anything I can prove to the contrary, there may be spiritual beings capable of the same transmigration," that he is "unable to show cause why these transferable devils should not exist." (Essays on *Agnositicism*, &c.)

† See the weighty remarks on this subject in Gore's *Dissertations*, pp. 23-27.

‡ The Rev. D. Smith, in his work *The Days of His Flesh*, thinks that Jesus, "knowing right well what the ailment was," "dealt with the demoniacs after the manner of a wise physician. He did not seek to dispel their hallucination. He fell in with it, and won their

reasonable to believe that the hour of "the power of darkness" (Luke xxii. 53) would be marked by exceptional manifestations of this form of evil. It is not the case, besides, that, as sometimes said, all diseases were ascribed to demoniacal agency,* though possession was usually accompanied by some form of disease (*e.g.*, Mark ix. 17*ff*). Distinction is clearly made in the Gospels between ordinary sickness, disease, lunacy, and possession (Cf. Matt. iv. 23, 24; ix. 32-35; x. 8, &c.).

confidence" (p. 108). In the case of the Gadarene demoniac, Mr. Smith thinks that the Lord, humouring the man's delusion, "pressed the swine into the service of His humane endeavours. . . . He smote the creatures with a sudden panic, and they rushed down the incline to their destruction. The stratagem was entirely successful" (p. 193). To me it seems easier to believe in the demons.

* Cf. *The Days of His Flesh*, p. 105.

X

The Bible and Ethics: "God and My Neighbour"

The Bible and Ethics: "God and My Neighbour"

THE Bible is assailed on its ethical side. The attack has been continuous from the days of Celsus and the Gnostics in the second century, down through the Deists of the eighteenth century, to the philosophical, critical, and freethinking schools of our own day. Sometimes there is a genuine zeal for morality in the accusations made: at other times, as in the coarser free-thinking organs, the attacks are wanton, ribald, and vulgar.

The shapes which this assault upon the Bible assumes

ARE PROTEAN.

The character of Jehovah in the Old Testament is vehemently assailed. The ancient Gnostics represented the God of the Old Testament as partial, passionate, vindictive, cruel, and many moderns reiterate the charge. Even a writer of the better order like Dr. Ladd does not hesitate, in his recent book on *The Philosophy of Religion*, to endorse the statement: "The Black Man of some shivering communistic savages is nearer the morality of our Lord than the Jehovah of Judges" (I. p. 226). If that be so, it need not be said that the "Jehovah of Judges" is no true God, and there is no meaning in

speaking of "revelation" in connection with Him. Much of the teaching of the Old Testament is denounced as barbarous. Its heroes are pilloried as unworthy and immoral.* The prophets are commonly allowed to have higher conceptions, but even they are held in many ways to have fallen short of perfect morality. Jesus Himself, while generally an object of reverence, does not wholly escape censure. His ideals are thought to be visionary and unpractical. Extremists like Nietzsche go further, and rave against Him as the arch-misleader of the race. His morality is a "morality for slaves." Paul's doctrines are alleged to have an immoral tendency. The inferences which the Apostle repudiated as blasphemy—"Let us do evil that good may come" (Rom. iii. 8)—"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (Rom. vi. 1)—are held to be the true outcome of his teaching.

All this seems very shocking, but it has to be dealt with. No one denies that there are

GENUINE MORAL DIFFICULTIES

in the Bible, as there are in the ordinary providence of God. But this is not the spirit in which to approach them. If there is one force that has wrought for the moral upbuilding of mankind more than another, every candid mind knows it is the Bible. It is not difficult to show that the greater number of these so-called "difficulties," at any rate, are due to misconception and

*Cf. Mr. Blatchford on "The Heroes of the Bible," in his book *God and My Neighbour*. "It seems strange to me," he says, "that such men as Moses, David, and Solomon should be glorified by Christian men and women, who execrate Henry VIII. and Richard III. as monsters. My pet aversion among the Bible heroes is Jacob; but Abraham and Lot were pitiful creatures." Is Lot a Bible "hero"?

perversion, and that much of the argument against the morality of the Bible is pure irrelevance. While, if the Bible is regarded in the balance of its parts, in its true character as a progressive revelation, and in the total impression its teaching makes upon the mind, it is seen to be a book which, from its first page to its last, "makes for righteousness"—exalts holiness, condemns sin, aims at nothing so much as the complete conquest of evil in human hearts and subjugation of it throughout the universe.

I.

I have said that many of the objections to the morality of the Bible arise from

MISCONCEPTION AND PERVERSION.

I need hardly stay to vindicate the character or religion of Jesus from Nietzsche's extravagances, or to show that the Bible is not committed to the approval of the sins it impartially narrates, even in the case of those who are called its "heroes." What is to be said of the character and shortcomings of these will be seen after.

But even those who have higher ideas of the morality of Israel make sometimes very indefensible statements. It is difficult to understand, *e.g.*, how a writer like Dr. Buchanan Gray can permit himself to say, as he does in his *Divine Discipline of Israel*, that the Hebrews "were bound by moral obligation and the sanction of religion in their dealings with one another, but were entirely free of these in their dealings with foreigners" (p. 48). What grounds exist for such a statement? Who can read the early chapters of the Bible without seeing that it is constantly assumed that there are moral laws which

BIND HEBREWS AND HEATHENS ALIKE,

and that the transgression of these is sin, which "the

Judge of all the earth" (Gen. xviii. 25) must punish? Why else the judgment of the flood (Gen. vi. 11-13), the destruction of the cities of the Plain (Gen. xviii. 20), the rooting-out of the Canaanites (Gen. xv. 16; Lev. xviii. 24 *ff.*; Deut. xii. 29 *ff.*)? Had Abraham no sense of rights as between man and man in his transactions with the sons of Heth about a burying-place (Gen. xxiii.), or Joseph in his behaviour in the house of his master the Egyptian (Gen. xxxix. 4-6, 9)? Even in the passage which Dr. Gray cites in support of his theme—Abraham's passing off his wife as his sister at Gerar—Abimelech reproaches Abraham: "Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done" (Gen. xx. 9).

Many of the objections to the ethics of the Bible arise from ignoring the law of

PROGRESS IN REVELATION,

which, even in respect of morality, is one that must certainly be recognised. It was as impossible in the twentieth century before Christ as it is in the twentieth century after Christ to introduce a ready-made system of morality, perfect in its principles and applications, and carried out with full consistency in an ideal constitution of society. It may, in our eyes, be a drawback that society is constituted on the principle of historical evolution: but so it is, and even revelation has to take account of the fact. I do not undervalue the amount of moral light which even the ancient world possessed. As the study of ancient religions shows (Babylonia, Egypt), that moral light was often very great. The world as Paul affirms, had from the first a great deal more light, both religious and moral, than it knew well how to make use of (Rom. i. 21, 25, 28).

Yet there is progress. One has only to compare

THE CONCEPTIONS OF THESE ANCIENT TIMES,

even within the Bible, with those of later periods, to see how much purer and more spiritual moral ideas had become in the days of the prophets; and how far even beyond the teaching of the prophets is the perfect spirituality of the law of love as enunciated by Jesus Christ. Polygamy, slavery, marriage of near-of-kin, blood-revenge, corporate responsibility, the unsparing use of the sword in war, were features of that old society into which revelation entered, and it was plainly impossible to abolish them at a stroke. Christianity itself, while inculcating principles which strike at the root of slavery, war, and many other evils, has even yet not been able to banish these evils wholly from society, though it is working steadily to that end. What then was possible at an earlier time but to take a single people out of the mass—or rather develop such a people from the individual and family—and, starting, as was inevitable, at the stage the world then occupied, to train and discipline this selected people, under the guidance of special revelation, to something better, for the ultimate benefit of the whole of mankind (Gen. xii. 1-3)? And, as we know, this was actually the method adopted.

When this principle of development in God's methods is grasped,

THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

is obtained, and each stage and phase of revelation is judged of by itself, in the light of its aim and outcome, instead of being unhistorically judged by the standards of a more perfect time—a law of judgment the moralist would apply to nothing else. It does not follow that all difficulties disappear, but we are now, at least, in the right position for dealing with them. It becomes apparent how, in the history of God's dealing with His people, many forces—for instance, the great religious ideas embodied in patriarchal and Mosaic revelations,

the principles of the moral law itself, as expanded in the "statutes and judgments" given at Sinai, with the various checks and restraints put on practices, as blood-revenge, polygamy, slavery, which it was not possible to remove at once—tended of necessity to a gradual elevation of the moral ideal, and to the ultimate abolition of the practices in question. It cannot but strike us that polygamy, slavery, blood-revenge, and similar evils, had all but disappeared in the time of our Lord, and hardly appear in the pictures of Jewish society in the Gospels.

II.

The real character of the Biblical revelation may now be looked at, and the objections taken to it in an ethical respect considered.

It is, first of all, I would say,

FALSEHOOD AND CALUMNY

to speak of the Jehovah of the Old Testament as a capricious, cruel, passionate, and vengeful being. Caprice, partiality, favouritism, have reference, I suppose, to the law of election which conspicuously marks the Divine procedure in revelation. But arbitrariness is the last word to apply to this method of the Divine action. What God does in His elections He does on wise and holy grounds. His election, which is a historical necessity, if a beginning is to be made somewhere, and His purpose is not to lose itself in indefiniteness, but is to be realised along definite lines, has not for its object *ex*clusion, but an ultimate wider *in*clusion. Abraham was called, that in him and his seed all families of the earth should be blessed (Gen. xii. 3). Israel was chosen to be God's "servant," to carry the knowledge of God, in due time, to the Gentiles (Is. xliv. 1-8, &c.). To speak of

Jehovah's choice of Israel as a piece of private favouritism is to show a colossal ignorance of the A B C of the Bible's teaching.

The other imputations on the Divine character are equally baseless. From the beginning of the Bible God is represented as a

HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS BEING,

condemning sin, punishing the evil-doer, protecting and rewarding the righteous. Everywhere His holiness, righteousness, wrath against sin, condescending grace, and covenant-keeping faithfulness are implied. Holiness, as "the principle which guards the eternal distinction between Creator and creature" (Martensen), necessarily reveals itself in God as "zeal" or "jealousy" for His own honour (Ex. xx. 7), and, in reaction against daring and presumptuous transgression, as wrath. Without an indignation that burns against sin in proportion to its heinousness, God would not *be* God—the absolutely Holy One. Mercy or forgiveness would be emptied of all its value were there not this sense of the evil of sin, and of God's holy judgment upon it, behind. But cruel and vindictive the God of the Bible is not. On the contrary, His character is

ESSENTIALLY MERCIFUL.

Witness His name, as revealed in awful majesty to Moses: "The Lord, the Lord, a God full of compassion, and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin"; though it is added: "That will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7; Cf. Ps. ciii. 8-18). The history is but a prolonged commentary on this character of God. It is stamped upon His law. It is written in its exhortations and commands.

If this is the true character of the Jehovah of the Bible, the answer is already given to many of the objections

DRAWN FROM THE BIBLE CHARACTERS.

Jehovah's command to Abraham was, "Walk before Me and be thou perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). Abraham's own challenge to Him was, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25). As his intercession for Sodom shows, Abraham knew perfectly clearly the distinction between "righteous" and "wicked." It is therefore incredible that the intention of the narrator should be to represent God as approving of, or indifferent to, Abraham's prevarications about his wife, which the patriarch weakly excused to his own conscience by the half-truth that Sarah *was* his sister by the father's side (Gen. xx. 12). The "plagues" by which the sin was prevented showed God's estimate of the transaction (Gen. xii. 17; xx. 18). God destroyed wicked Sodom with fire and brimstone (Gen. xix. 24). How, then, should He be supposed to do aught but abominate the vileness of that city, or any taint that Lot or his daughters had contracted from it. David sinned grievously about Bathsheba and her husband; no palliation can be offered for his offence. But God sent Nathan to David to denounce him for his crime, and declare his sore punishment—a denunciation which led to the king's sincere repentance (2 Sam. xii.). How should it be represented as if the God of the Bible were implicated in, or condoned, David's trangression? I have read carefully the Book of Judges. It it the story of a rude, disorderly, in many ways evil, time (Judges xxi. 25). But what I see chiefly in the narrative is that, when Israel forsook God, He gave them into the hands of their enemies, and they were grievously afflicted, but whenever they turned to Him with the whole heart, He raised up saviours for them, and

delivered them. When, moreover, I read of Deborah, of Gideon, or Boaz, and Ruth, I cannot regard this age, with all its faults, as wholly destitute of a nobler piety.

The men of the Bible must be

JUDGED BY THE STANDARD OF THEIR OWN AGE

—not by ours. Judged even by that, they have faults grievous and many, and, as respects these, are set forth as examples for our warning, not as models for our imitation. But the wholesale blackening of their characters in which certain writers indulge can only be described as malicious and unpardonable exaggeration. Only the crassest, surely, will believe that God chose Jacob as heir of the blessing because of his worldly cunning in over-reaching Esau, or that David is pronounced to be the man after God's own heart because of his adultery with Bathsheba. There were far other and deeper things in these men, or they would not have occupied the place they do in the Bible. Despite his error in his evasion about his wife—an error which he, no doubt, thought an excusable means of defence for both—the character of

ABRAHAM

is one of the noblest in the history of religion.* His heroic faith, his prompt and unhesitating obedience to God's word, his largeness of soul, which displays itself in all his conduct, his unfailing courtesy, unselfishness, and meekness, with which is joined, when need arises, the most conspicuous courage and decision, all vindicate for him the place he will continue to hold at the head of revelation as the Father of the Faithful.

JACOB'S

is a more complex character—deep, subtle, with a strong

*See the remarks of Mozley on Abraham in his *Ruling Ideas*, &c. p. 21 *ff.*

gravitation earthwards, and a tendency to craft, inherited probably, from his mother—but none the less with a strong religious bent, a grasp of the ideal, a power of responding to God's revelations, a sense of the value of spiritual privilege, and, on the whole, a patient, faithful, affectionate spirit, which grew nobler and better as time went on. "The substance, the strength of the chosen family," as Stanley says, "the true inheritance of the promise to Abraham, was interwoven with the very essence of 'the upright man dwelling in tents,' steady, persevering, moving onward with deliberate, settled purpose, through years of suffering and prosperity, of exile and return, of bereavement and recovery. . . . The dark, crafty character of the youth, though never wholly lost—for 'Jacob' he still is called even to the end of his days—has been by trial and affliction changed into the prince-like, godlike character of his manhood." *

DAVID'S CHARACTER

has its huge, dark blot, and minor faults may be pointed out in it, but no impartial student of David's history can easily deny that the character which the Bible gives him as a man and king who sought to do God's will is well sustained throughout. His youth is blameless; his behaviour at the court of Saul is without reproach; his relations with Saul and Jonathan are magnanimous and affectionate: his conduct as leader of a band of rude, rough men in the wilderness is such as to inspire them with the most devoted attachment (2 Sam. xxiii. 15-18). His sorrow at the death of Saul and Jonathan is genuine and intense. His services to his nation as king were the greatest a ruler could render; his labours for the revival of religion and the worthy celebration of God's worship

* *Jewish Church*, I., pp. 46, 56. See the whole sketch in Stanley, in contrast with Mr. Blatchford's caricature of his "pet aversion."

were the fruit of sincere conviction. The whole foundations of his character in his love to, and trust in, God his "Rock," are laid bare in such a psalm as the 18th, which there need be no hesitation in ascribing to him. As I have said elsewhere: "David's sins were great, but we may trust a Carlyle or a Maurice for a just estimate of his character, rather than the caviller, whose chief delight is to magnify his faults." *

III.

These attacks, then, on the characters of the men of the Bible may be dismissed, but what, it will be objected, of the

OTHER STRAINS IN THE NARRATIVE

—of God's tempting of Abraham, of His visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, of His commands to exterminate the Canaanites? It will be well to glance at these objections separately.

The story of

THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

stands in close connection with what is told of the gift of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah in their old age, and with the hopes bound up in that child of promise. In this lay the essence of the trial. The story itself, it may be noted, is a witness to the early date of the narrative. The temptation described is such as could only belong to an early stage in the history. No Israelite would have invented such a tale about his progenitor, and the narrative cannot be explained as a reminiscence of any "tribal" event. The incident clearly presupposes that, in Abraham's day, human sacrifice, especially the

* *Prob. of the O.T.*, p. 445. Cf. Carlyle, *Heroes*, p. 72, Maurice, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 60 *ff.*

devotion of the first-born to God, was a familiar fact of Canaanitish religion. That the temptation to sacrifice his son arose, as some suppose, from Abraham's own thoughts, seems to me, in all the circumstances of the case, most improbable. The test was one truly imposed on him by the God who had given him his son. The object of the trial, however, was not to give approval of human sacrifice, but, as the event showed, after proof had been obtained of Abraham's willingness to surrender even his dearest and best at the call of God (Gen. xxii. 12), to put on such sacrifice the stamp of the Divine *dis*approbation, and rule it out of God's worship for all time thereafter. Standing at the commencement of revelation to Israel, this incident barred out all thought of human sacrifice as an acceptable form of God's service.

When objection is taken to the language in the Second Commandment (Ex. xx. 5; Deut. v. 8) about

VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN,

the question may first be put, Is it not the fact that, in the natural order of things, the sins of parents *are* visited upon their children? What is the law of heredity but the declaration of this fact? One of the most terrible aspects of wrong-doing is that the penalties are seldom or never confined to the transgressor, but overflow on all connected with him—often most severely on his innocent offspring. This follows from the solidaric constitution of society. But the point is missed in the Second Commandment when the stress is laid on the unrelieved operation of this providential law. The contrast in this place is rather with what is said in the next clause about God's showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Him (Ex. xx. 6). The entail of evil is viewed as

descending only to the third and fourth generation. God is reluctant, as it were, to think of it descending further. But His mercy, in contrast, is viewed as descending to *thousands* of generations (Cf. Ps. ciii. 17). Mercy, in the prospect, swallows up judgment. How different an aspect does the Commandment assume when regarded in this light!

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CANAANITES

presents a real difficulty which everyone, I suppose, in proportion to the humanity of his disposition, feels. The various expedients which have been suggested for relieving it do not, I confess, bring much help to my mind. I can neither persuade myself, with the critics, that the command was not really given, nor can I rid my mind of the sense of awfulness in connection with it. One thing, however, I do see, that the judgment was not an arbitrary one, but was connected with a moral state. It had a moral basis. If the land was already in the days of Abraham promised to his descendants (Gen. xii. 7; xv. 7, 18; xvii. 8), this was not without regard to the character of the inhabitants. The fulfilment is delayed to a later time, "for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full" (Gen. xv. 16). Sodom and Gomorrah already in that age furnished examples of the growing wickedness of the land (Gen. xiii. 14-18, xviii. 20, xix.). The vileness of the inhabitants was such that in the days of Moses the land "spued" them out (Lev. xviii. 24-30). Their transgressions are dwelt on in Deut. xii. 29-32. Corruption, in short, had eaten into the core of this people. What was to be done with them? When the ancient world had become similarly corrupt, God destroyed it by a flood (Gen. vi. 5-8, 11-13). When the Canaanites had filled up the cup of their iniquity He gave them over to the sword of the Israelites. "After all," as Ottley says,

quoting Westcott, "the Canaanites were put under the ban, 'not for false belief, but for vile actions.'"* Nor was there any partiality in this. As I have said in my *Problem of the Old Testament*, "The sword of the Israelite is, after all, only a more acute form of the problem that meets us in the providential employment of the sword of the Assyrian, the Chaldean, or Roman to inflict the judgment of God on Israel itself" (pp. 471-2).

If the difficulty is acute in the case of the Canaanites, we have to remember that this case, on account of its special aggravations, stands all but alone. Though belonging to a dispensation of severity, under which "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward" (Heb. ii. 2), yet, judged of as a whole, and in its prevailing spirit,

THE LAW OF MOSES IS NOT UNMERCIFUL.

It is the very opposite. A spirit of humanity breathes through it such as is not met with in any other ancient code. Its laws of warfare even have many humane and considerate provisions (Deut. xii.). They give no sanction to the dreadful barbarities and tortures—the impalings, flayings, blindings, mutilations, &c.—of Assyrian and Babylonian conquerors.† In besieging a city the very fruit trees are to be spared (Deut. xii. 19-20). Captive women are to be delicately treated (Deut. xxi. 10-14). The poor, the widow, the fatherless, the stranger, the homeless, the distressed, are Jehovah's special care, and

**Aspects of O.T.*, p. 179.

† David's treatment of the Moabites (2 Samuel viii. 2) and Ammonites (2 Samuel xii. 31) –in this case, under great provocation—and Amaziah's of the Edomites (2 Chron. xxv. 12) are not to be approved. For another spirit cf. 2 Chron. xxv. 3, 4—the law; 2 Kings vi. 21-23—the prophets. The severe treatment of Adonibezek in Judges i. 6 is somewhat different; it was (as he acknowledged, v. 7) a not unrighteous retribution for his own habitual cruelty.

His law is full of provisions for them (Cf. Ex. xxii. 21-27, xxiii. 9-12, Deut. xi. 7*ff*, xxiv. 14-22, &c.). Private ill-will is not to be allowed to enter into the treatment of an enemy (Ex. xxiii. 4, 5; Deut. xxii. 1-4).

An illustration may be taken from the laws on

BOND-SERVICE,

which are often spoken of as a dark spot in the Hebrew legislation. The Mosaic law did not establish bond service. It accepted it as an existing usage, labouring to the utmost to reduce, and, as far as that was practicable, to abolish the evils connected with it. If from temporary causes a Hebrew lost the use of his freedom, the right to it was not thereby destroyed. It returned to him at the beginning of the seventh year (Ex. xxi. 2; Lev. xxv. 39*ff*). A law cannot be regarded as favourable to slavery which makes man-stealing a crime, punishable by death (Ex. xxi. 16), and which enacts that a fugitive slave, taking refuge in Israel from his heathen master, is not to be delivered back to him, but is to be permitted to reside where he will in the land (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16). Bondsmen, both Hebrew and non-Israelite, were incorporated as part of the nation, had legal rights, sat with the other members of the family at the board of the passover, took part in all religious festivals, and had secured to them the privilege of the Sabbath rest. The master was responsible for the treatment of his bondsman; and, if he injured him, even to the extent of smiting out a tooth, the bondsman thereby regained his freedom (Ex. xxi. 26, 27). Humanity and kindness are constantly inculcated. When the Hebrew bondsman went out in the seventh year, he was to go forth loaded with presents. The one

SEEMING EXCEPTION

is Ex. xxi. 20—the passage about the bondsman dying under chastisement. This, however, must be taken in

its connection with preceding laws. It certainly gives no sanction to the master to endanger his servant's life. The question is one of criminal jurisprudence. The case is presumed to be one of *bona fide* chastisement with the rod, and murderous intent, if present, had to be proved. If the slave died under the master's hand such intent—at least, sinful excess of anger—*was* held to be proved, and the master was "surely punished"; if he did not, even though he died afterwards, the master received the benefit of the doubt, and escaped with a fine of money. The obvious aim of the law is not to place the bondsman at the master's mercy, but to *restrict* the master's power over him. Ancient law recognised no restriction.

The whole design of the law, in one word, was

TO MAKE MEN HOLY

as God was holy (Ex. xix. 6, Lev. xix. 2). It was based on a moral code which, as Jesus says, had for its two great principles, love to God and love to one's neighbour (Matt. xxii. 36-40). On this moral law was built the covenant between God and Israel. The tables of stone on which it was written—"the tables of the testimony" (Ex. xxxii. 15)—were the only objects in the ark of the covenant in Israel's holiest place.* So far as the law mirrors it, the religion of Israel is ethical in its inmost fibre.

I need not delay long on the ethical conceptions of the

PROPHETS AND PSALMS,

for the elevated moral strain of these is commonly admitted. The critics in the main are with us here, for, according to them, it was the prophets who first gave a perfectly ethical character to Israel's religion. The prophets are nothing if they are not preachers of

* See my *Problem of the O. T.*, p. 48.

righteousness. "Cease to do evil; learn to do well" (Is. i. 17). "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Mic. vi. 8). The Psalms in every line express an abhorrence of evil, and love of truth, righteousness, and mercy. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? . . . He that hath clean hands and a pure heart" (Ps. xxiv. 3, 4; Cf. Ps. i., xv., &c.). "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts. . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. li. 6-10). The Book of Proverbs is a *vade mecum* to a straight, pure, virtuous life. He who guides himself by its wisdom will not go astray, but will find its counsels profitable for the life that now is, as well as for that which is to come (Prov. iv. 7-9; 1 Tim. iv. 8).

The one point on which a *caveat* may be raised here is in regard to

THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS.

Here, indeed, a note is heard which belongs to an older dispensation, and which Christians, who have learned a higher lesson in the school of Jesus, cannot ordinarily imitate. If the frequent prayers for the destruction of enemies in the Psalms were the expression of private revengefulness or hatred, they could not, of course, under any dispensation, be defended. But that, very plainly, is not their real nature. The spirit of private revengefulness is as heartily condemned in the Old Testament as in the New (Cf. Ex. xxiii. 4, 5; Ps. vii. 4). It is proud and triumphant wickedness, enmity to God and to His cause and people, which is the subject of these denunciations, prayers, and imprecations of doom. Let anyone read such Psalms as the 4th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 12th, &c., and see if there is not a very real sense in which he can even yet sometimes share in them?

IV.

With what grace shall I now speak of defending the ethical teaching

OF JESUS AND HIS RELIGION,

as that is exhibited in the pages of the New Testament? Where shall we look for purity like His, which descends into the inmost thoughts of the heart, and forbids even the faintest uprisings of unholy passion and desire (Matt. v. 22, 28, &c.)? Where shall we find the inculcation of every virtue—of everything true, honourable, pure, lovely, of good report (Phil. iv. 8)—carnest, repeated, continuous, as we do in the apostolic writings? What can match the Apostle's great hymn on love in 1 Cor. xiii.? How beautiful the cluster he presents of "the fruit of the Spirit" in Gal. v. 22, 23—"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"; and how foul the catalogue of the "works of the flesh" to which he opposes it (Gal. vi. 19-21). How comprehensively he argues: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; love, therefore, is the fulfilment of the law" (Rom. xii. 10). How strenuously he exhorts to the fulfilling of all relative duties (Eph. v. 22 *ff.*, vi. 1-9; Col. iii. 18*ff.* iv. 1). How practical his everyday teaching: "Let him that stole steal no more" (Eph. iv. 28); "If any will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. iii. 10); "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus ii. 12), &c.

Alike with Jesus and His Apostles, the supreme

TEST OF DISCIPLESHIP

is the doing of good works, the bringing forth of fruit unto holiness, the dying to sin and living to righteousness (Matt. v. 16; vii. 21*ff*; John xv. 8; Rom. vi. 22; Titus iii.

8, &c.). The whole end of redemption is that, being redeemed from all iniquity, God's people should be holy (Rom. vi. 6; viii. 3, 4; Gal. i. 4; Tit. iii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 14-24, &c.).

How gross a libel on Christianity it is to represent it, as is sometimes done, as immoral in character and tendency, must already be evident from the above. Confirmation, however, if that is needed, may be drawn from

THE MOUTH OF THE ADVERSARY

himself. Mr. Blatchford's book, *God and My Neighbour*, is, in intention, an attack on Christianity and the Bible. The impression I have formed in reading it is that Mr. Blatchford does not realise how much he himself owes to Christ and His ideals. He vehemently assails Christianity; but on what grounds? Paradoxical as it may seem, chiefly on the ground that Christian society fails to realise the ideals of its professed Master. His picture of Christian society as chiefly a collection of shams, hypocrisies, self-indulgences, and vices is, no doubt, frightfully overdrawn. But let it pass, and see what he makes of it.

Here are a few sentences:—

"As London is, so is England. This is a Christian country. What would Christ think of Park-lane, and the slums, and the hooligans? What would He think of the Stock Exchange, and the Music Hall, and the race-course? What would He think of our national ideals?"

"Pausing again, over against Exeter Hall, I mentally apostrophise the Christian British people. 'Ladies and gentlemen,' I say, 'you are Christian in name, but I discern little of Christ in your ideals, your institutions, or your daily lives. You are a mercenary, self-indulgent, frivolous, boastful, blood-guilty mob of heathen.'

"If to praise Christ in words, and deny Him in deeds, be Christianity, then London is a Christian city, and

England is a Christian nation. For it is very evident that our common English ideals are anti-Christian, and that our commercial, foreign, and social affairs are run on anti-Christian lines" (Preface).

Once more: "Is Christianity the rule of life in America and Europe? Are the masses of people who accept it peaceful, virtuous, chaste, spiritually minded, prosperous, happy? Are their national laws based on its ethics? Are their international politics guided by the Sermon on the Mount? . . . From Glasgow to Johannesburg, from Bombay to San Francisco, is God or Mammon king? . . ." (p. 166, Popular Edition).

What, now, does all this mean, I would ask, if not that the sin of Christendom is that it is *not* obeying the precepts of Christ its Master, who is still held up as

THE IDEAL

to be obeyed? It is *His* teaching, *His* ethics, *His* religion, which yield the standard by which the Christian peoples are judged and condemned. They *ought* to be living in accordance with Christ's teaching, but are not. If they did, it is implied, they would be "peaceful, virtuous, chaste, spiritually minded, prosperous, happy." Was there ever so strange an indictment against a religion before? "If to praise Christ in words, and deny Him in deeds is Christianity, then London is a Christian city," &c.! But who will endorse this as a definition of Christianity? And if Christianity is not this, but the opposite of this, what do we come to but that it is the purest and best religion the world has yet seen? Christ is to-day the conscience of humanity. He is the touchstone, even for Mr. Blatchford, of what is good and evil!

The same fallacy runs through the whole of this singular book. On a later page (p. 197) we have drawn

out the qualities of "a really humane and civilised nation." In

SUCH A NATION

there should be no such thing as poverty, as ignorance, as crime, as idleness, as war, as slavery, as hate, as envy, as pride, as greed, as gluttony, as vice. But, the author says, "This is not a humane and civilised nation, and never will be while it accepts Christianity as its religion." He adds: "These are my reasons for opposing Christianity." But who, with the least sense of fairness, does not see that the things he contends for are the very things which Christianity is constantly inculcating? These are Christian virtues. In the Christian ideal of the Kingdom of God every one of the things here contended for is embraced. Nay, in opposing Christianity, Mr. Blatchford is opposing the only agency that can produce them.

Mr. Blatchford's reply to all this is that, however beautiful Christianity (ethically) may be in theory, it is a failure in practice. It is, therefore, not Divine (p. 166). As will be seen later, it is far from true that Christianity is a failure in the sense intended. But one thing perfectly clear is, that, where Christianity fails, Mr. Blatchford's scheme—if scheme it can be called—

WILL NOT SUCCEED.

In the nature of things it cannot. Christianity holds up lofty ideals. But it does not stop there. It nourishes the sense of obligation and responsibility, and furnishes motives and aids adequate to produce the results it aims at. It is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16). Mr. Blatchford has nothing of the kind to offer. On the contrary, he destroys the very possibility of the realisation of his own ideals by his audacious denial of human freedom and accountability. Man, he glories to teach, is not a free agent, but a machine. He is what

heredity and circumstances have made him. He is not to blame for his wrong-doing. He cannot sin against God. I do not discuss this theory, uncompromisingly expounded in his chapter on "Determinism." I only point out the folly of seeking an ethical millennium along lines that do away with ethical conduct altogether.

It is indeed a singular confusion when men oppose the service of God to

THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY;

when "God and my neighbour" becomes "God *or* my neighbour"—which is pretty much Mr. Blatchford's point of view. What reader of the Bible does not know that the service of God includes service of my neighbour? In Law, Prophets, Psalms, Proverbs, Gospels, Epistles, love of the neighbour is never left out. It is made the chief part of practical religion. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke . . .? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and to bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, &c.?" (Is. lviii. 6, 7). "Whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? (1 John iii. 17). "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. i. 27; Cf. ii. 15, 16). Jesus supremely inculcates love of the neighbour—who can forget the parable of the good Samaritan? (Luke x. 25-37)—even of the enemy (Matt. v. 43-48; Cf. Rom. xii. 20). Only, where secular ethics would fain divorce these two things, and make love of the neighbour independent of religion, the Bible connects them, and pours into the earthly duty the whole force of the higher motive (Matt. xxii. 36-40). Separated from its true fountain in the love of God, the love of humanity dries up and dies. History

is the proof of the intimate relation of the two, as will afterwards be shown.

V.

The morality of Christianity has been assailed on various other grounds. The charge, *e.g.*, has sometimes been brought against it that, while praiseworthy up to a certain point, the ideals of Jesus are

NARROW AND LIMITED

in their outlook. F. D. Strauss may be the mouthpiece here. In the closing paragraphs of his *New Life of Jesus* (1864) he says: "The life of man in the family retreats into the background with this Teacher, who himself was without a family. His relationship towards the State appears a purely passive one. He is averse to acquisition of property, not merely for Himself because of His calling, but He is also visibly disinclined to it; and all that concerns art and the beautiful enjoyment of life remains completely outside of His circle of vision."* The one thing true in this objection is that in His

INTENSELY COMPRESSED

public life, Jesus did not concern Himself in His teaching with education, art, politics, science, trade, and a thousand other human interests in themselves most legitimate. He had infinitely greater things to occupy His mind; an infinitely greater work to do; infinitely greater truths to teach a world lost to the knowledge of God and of the way of eternal life. In comparison with the work the Father had given Him to do—the redemption of the world, the founding of the Kingdom of God,

*Similar objections are urged by Mr. J. S. Mill, in his essay on *Liberty*, and latterly by Mazzini (*Essays*, v. p. 363). See remarks on these writers by Rev. D. S. Cairns, M.A., in his volume, *Christianity and the Modern World*, Ch. iv.

the imparting of spiritual and eternal blessings, the restoring of lost men to the love and fellowship of their Heavenly Father—all merely secular interests paled into insignificance. "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" was His reproof to one who wished Him to interfere in a question of inheritance (Luke xii. 14). His life was full of sacrifice, and He knew that a Cross awaited Him at the end. "I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50). What sort of mind is it that can combine the thought of Jesus—these momentous interests weighing hourly on His spirit—with the idea of His giving little parlour or lecture-hall discourses on poetry, painting, music, political economy, the best methods of education, or, say, of agriculture! The idea is preposterous.

Yet it would be

A TOTALLY FALSE INFERENCE

from these facts to assume that Jesus Himself meant to belittle the importance of such matters in their own place, or that His religion is hostile to their cultivation or development. The very opposite is the case. One might ask, indeed—What kind of government was there in Christ's time, what sort of education, what forms of art, what species of science, of which One such as He could be expected to approve? Jesus came assuredly to make all things new in these as in every other department of life; to reconstitute society, from top to bottom, on new bases. His religion, *e.g.*, strikes in its fundamental ideas at slavery, but He did not therefore begin a political crusade against slavery as existing in His time. Christ's teachings embody

DEEP, ENDURING PRINCIPLES,

set forth grand master truths, occupy themselves with

the eternal, not with that which is simply temporal. It is this which gives Christ's words weight. Each age as it comes round finds them fruitful in applications to itself. Jesus commits Himself to no one side in party politics; to no one denomination or party in the Church; to no one form of Church government or action exclusively; to no one mode of social organisation; to no one solution of the questions of capital and labour, of rulers and subjects, of rich and poor. The reason is that the solution of these questions proper to one age or stage of society might not be the solution proper to another; and Christ is not the teacher of one age only, else His words, like those of all other teachers, would become obsolete, but the teacher.

OF ALL TIMES AND ALL AGES.

Hence His words never grow old; never are left behind in the world's progress.*

Yet no one, reading the Gospels, would conclude that because of this Jesus was indifferent to the beauty of God's world, to human life and its relationships, to the necessity of civil government, to trade, industry, or any of the ordinary occupations of life. As I have written in another connection: "The world to Him is

GOD'S WORLD, NOT THE DEVIL'S.

He has the deepest feeling for its beauty, its sacredness, the interest of God in the humblest of its creatures; His parables are drawn from its laws; He recognises that its institutions are the expressions of a divine order. The world of nature and society, therefore, in all the wealth and fulness of their relations, are always the background

*This was one of the things which most powerfully impressed the late Prof. Romanes. "It becomes most remarkable," he says, "that in literal truth there is no reason why any of His words should ever pass away in the sense of becoming obsolete." (*Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 157-8).

of His picture. We see this in His parables, which have nothing narrow and ascetic about them, but mirror the life of humanity in its amplest breadth—the sower, shepherd, merchant, handicraftsman, the servants with their talents (and proving faithful and unfaithful in the use of them), the builder, the vineyard-keeper, weddings, royal feasts, &c."*

STRANGE, TRULY,

that any should think Jesus indifferent to beauty in nature, who remember His words on the lilies of the field (Matt. vii. 28, 29); or indifferent to beauty of thought, or word, or act, who recall His appreciation of Mary's deed in breaking the costly alabaster box of spikenard (Matt. xxvi. 6-13); or indifferent to the family, who think of Him as one to whom marriage was a divine institution to be jealously guarded, and who consecrated it by His presence and blessing (Matt. xix. 3-9; John ii. 1-11), to whom human paternity was but an image of the divine Fatherhood (Matt. vii. 9-11), and who took the little children in His arms and blessed them (Matt. xix. 13-15); or indifferent to civil government, who consider that He inculcated, and exemplified in practice, the duty of submission to lawful authority (Matt. xxii. 19-21). Jesus had a higher ideal than national "patriotism," even that of a universal Kingdom of God. Yet He, like Paul, had the deepest love for His own nation, and wept at the thought of its coming inevitable woes (Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xix. 41, 42).

Christ's morality, in brief, is

NOT ANTI-SOCIAL,

and His religion has proved to be in history a constant source of inspiration to social and moral progress—to art, education, science, reforms, refinement of life, civil order,

**Christian View of God*, p. 357.

the elevation and purification of political ideas. The proof of this must be reserved for another paper; but it follows from the very nature of the religion. Christ's disciples are not to withdraw from the world, but are to live in it, and to be its salt and light (Matt. v. 13, 14). Out of this life in the world, in obedience to Christ's ideals, will spring a new type of marriage relation, of family life, of relations between masters and servants, of social life generally. It cannot be otherwise, if Christ's Kingdom is to be the secretly transforming influence He says it will be. Affection, intelligence, love of all things pure and beautiful, will be quickened; knowledge of nature will be sanctified, and science be pursued in a devout and reverent spirit; order and industry under righteous government, in society, will lead to prosperity. The love of knowledge has ever attended the spread of true religion. Strange as it may sound to many, the great discoverers in science have mostly been religious men.*

*See the striking evidence of this in E. Naville's *Modern Physics*. On the influence of Christianity on art, there is an interesting supplementary chapter in Bruce's *Gesta Christi*, Second Edition.

XI

Discrepancies and Difficulties

Discrepancies and Difficulties

MANY find a chief ground of objection to the Bible in the "discrepancies" and "mistakes" in which its pages are alleged to abound. To read some writers, one would imagine that discrepancy and error were the chief features of the sacred book. There is a positive delight shown often in hunting up, multiplying, and mercilessly exposing these supposed mistakes of the Bible. Delitzsch speaks of the *Widerspruchsjägerei*—the "hunting for contradictions"—characteristic of the modern critical school.

Some of the alleged discrepancies are as

OLD AS THE HILLS

—Celsus, *e.g.*, serves up those on the resurrection—others are genuine discoveries of the modern spirit. Popular infidelity willingly appropriates the material thus provided for it in the works of Christian and rationalistic writers, and thinks that thereby the Bible is effectually discredited.

This raises at once the question which troubles so many minds as to whether inspiration is bound up with what is called

"INERRANCY"

of the sacred record—*i.e.*, positive and absolute accuracy in even the minutest, and seemingly most unessential

details of historical, geographical, and chronological statements. If, it is argued, the Bible is an inspired book, must it not be free from error, even in the minutest degree, in outward as well as inward things; and is not this involved in a right conception of its infallibility as a rule of faith and practice? On this point it should be frankly recognised that

OPINIONS DIFFER,

and to some extent are likely always to differ, among those who are the most devoted believers in, and defenders of, the Bible as, through and through, the inspired Word of God. It is not a question, really, which arises in our present discussion, for the issues between the defenders and the assailants of the Bible at the present moment are not of the minute character here described, but affect the claim of the Bible to be a veracious record of the history of God's revelations, and the inspired vehicle of His message of salvation to mankind, in any proper sense at all.

I approach the subject from a somewhat different standpoint. Without attempting to adjudicate between rival theories of inspiration, or using watchwords like "inerrancy," "verbal inspiration," "infallibility," which might breed debate, and prejudice my treatment, I propose to offer some considerations which may tend to restore confidence in the Bible as

A RELIABLE BOOK,

and, by removing misconceptions, may incidentally throw useful light on the doctrine of inspiration itself. I take this line, because I am persuaded that many of the disputes on inspiration arise from misunderstandings between the parties which a more careful study of the facts of the Bible itself would do much to clear away.

On the main point, I would only record my own conviction that the working of the objection from "discrepancies" has been vastly overdone. What continually impresses me, in a candid survey of the field of Scripture, is not the amount of error in the Bible, but how surprisingly free the sacred text is, judged with fairness, from anything that can be described as demonstrable contradiction, or historical mistake. This of itself, if it can be established, may be felt to furnish a sufficiently striking proof of inspiration.

I.

I may first

CLEAR THE GROUND

by ruling out of consideration a number of cases covered by principles already laid down, and in part illustrated, in previous papers, or by principles which are in themselves obvious.

Thus it is freely acknowledged, and is beyond dispute, that the books of the Bible—especially those of the Old Testament—have a long literary history, and, though preserved by a wonderful providence of God from destruction or fatal corruption, have yet, to no small extent, undergone

THE VICISSITUDES

to which all works frequently transcribed, and handed down in more or less imperfect copies are liable. Errors in this way creep into the text, specially into names and numbers; and changes of a more serious kind occasionally occur, as from interpolation, explanatory annotation, editorial revision for a special purpose (*e.g.*, temple use of psalms, &c.). Such causes give rise to difficulties, which it is the business of a cautious criticism to endeavour to remove, or at least to lessen. In the New Testament the

aids to textual criticism are abundant. In the Old Testament they are much less so (existing MSS. but represent one exemplar), and we are thrown back on internal comparison of the books, or comparison with still more defective versions, or on conjecture.

No theory of inspiration is here involved, and one can readily see by comparison of the Books of Samuel and Kings with Chronicles, how many

SEEMING "DISCREPANCIES,"

in names, numbers, lists, &c., have this as their explanation. Thus, in 2 Sam. viii. 4 we read "700" horsemen, where the parallel passage in 1 Chron. xviii. 4 has "7,000"; in 2 Sam. x. 18, again, we have "700," where 1 Chron. xix. 18 has "7,000"; in 2 Sam. xxiii. 8 we have "800" slain, where 1 Chron. xi. 11 has "300" (here also the words in 2 Sam., A.V., "that sat in the seat" are probably a corruption for the "Jashobeam" of 1 Chron. —See R.V.); 1 Kings iv. 26 has "40,000" stalls, where 2 Chron. ix. 25 has the more likely number "4,000." The "50,070" men slain at Beth-shemesh, 1 Sam. vi. 19, is almost certainly a corruption of the same order (Josephus has "70"); and there are numerous other examples. As instance of changes in text, accidental or designed, Ps. xviii. may be compared in its two versions in the Psalter and in 2 Sam. xxiii., or Ps. xiv. (Jehovistic) may be compared with Ps. liii. (Elohistic).

Another class of cases of "discrepancies" which may be briefly dismissed are those which arise, not from the text as we actually have it, but from the arbitrary assertions and

HYPOTHESES OF CRITICISM.

The number of these "discrepancies" is legion, but they are mostly self-created.

Thus, we have "contradictory narratives of the

creation" in Gen. i. and ii. But this depends on the critics' way of looking at the history. The two narratives are in no way parallel. The first gives an orderly account of the creation of heaven and earth; the second is not, in strictness, an account of the creation at all (it says nothing of the creation of heaven or earth, or of the general plant creation), but has for its object to show how man was dealt with by God at his creation, how he was placed in suitable surroundings, how a helpmeet was provided for him, &c.; and the whole material is grouped from this point of view. In the Book of Genesis itself the narratives are connected in the closest way (Gen. ii. 4) without the least sense of "contradiction."

A favourite method is to divide out a narrative among its several assumed authors (J, E, P, &c.), then, treating each part as complete, to

PIT ONE AGAINST ANOTHER,

and mark off the differences between them. As in reality the parts of the narrative are closely interrelated, and all are needed to give the complete story, the semblance of contradiction is easily produced. Thus the P writer is supposed to "know nothing" of a "fall"; yet, as Wellhausen admits, he was acquainted with the J narrative of Gen. iii., and presupposes it.* There is alleged to be "contradiction" between J and P as to the duration of the flood; yet, when the narrative is taken as a whole, harmony, not discrepancy, is revealed.† The story of Joseph is split up between two writers, J and E, who are affirmed to give discrepant accounts of the sale of Joseph, and of his fortunes in Egypt. But the ground for this discrepancy disappears, if the narrative is accepted in its

**Hist. of Israel*, p. 310.

†Cf. my *Problem of O.T.*, pp. 349-50. The J and P parts are throughout complementary.

integrity. Wonderful things are made of the story of Moses and Aaron in Exodus, of the story of the mission of the spies, of the account of the rebellion of Korah. But the narratives have first to be torn to pieces before the discrepancies can be made out.*

Another part of the same method is to regard all resembling narratives, especially if found in distinct "sources," as

"DUPLICATES,"

and to evolve, as before, "contradictions" between them. Thus Hagar's flight, Gen, xvi., is identified with her expulsion by Sarah, ch. xxi.; Abraham's denial of his wife at Egypt, Gen. xii., is identified with his repetition of the offence at Gerar, ch. xx.; Jacob's vision at Bethel, before going to Paddan-Aram., Gen. xxviii. 10*ff*, is identified with God's appearance to him on his return, Gen. xxxv., *ff*; the call of Moses at the bush in Midian, Ex. iii. 1*ff*, is made the same as the revelation to him in Egypt, ch. vi. 2*ff*, &c. Yet there are plain indications in the narratives themselves that the incidents mentioned are distinct, and, generally, the later is seen to imply the earlier.† But the "contradictions" of time, place, and circumstance fall, if the incidents are not the same.

I do not need to repeat what was said in a previous paper of the supposed

SCIENTIFIC "MISTAKES"

of the Bible. Defenders and impugners of the inspiration of the record alike need to bear in mind the fact that it is not the object of the Bible to give scientific descriptions of events in a form anticipative of 19th or 20th century discoveries. Its language is popular in character,

*Cf. *Problem of O.T.* for details, pp. 354-59.

†Cf. *Problem of the O.T.*, pp. 236*ff*, 361.

in accordance with the standpoint of the observer, and the state of knowledge of his time; still, as was before observed, with a wonderful freedom from positive error. Talk, therefore, such as one sometimes hears, about the "mistakes of Moses," is wholly irrelevant. Such language might properly be used if it were the Babylonian myth of the creation—Tiamat being cut in two by Merodach, and heaven made from one-half of her, earth from the other—that was being dealt with. But the Genesis narrative, in its monotheistic grandeur, and the true and sublime ideas that inspire it, is above all such criticism. Similarly in the story of the flood. The language employed is that of broad, popular description, as the catastrophe might appear to one who actually observed it. Beyond declaring the destruction of the race of mankind, there is no attempt, as there is no call, to describe scientifically the range or effects of the deluge.

II.

I have next to remark that very many alleged "discrepancies" and "errors," not falling within the above classes, are, when properly examined, found to be, in reality,

NO DISCREPANCIES

or mistakes at all. This is frequently obvious from simple inspection; it is sometimes made clear by the progress of discovery. If no book has been so often assailed as the Bible, none has so often been vindicated from charges brought against it. Such, *e,g.*, are the Biblical statements, formerly referred to,* on the non-Semitic character of the early Babylonians, on the priority of Babylonian to

* Cf. the paper on Archæology.

Assyrian civilisation, on the Semitic origin of Elam, on the power of the Hittites, on Sargon II. and his siege of Ashdod, on the existence of Belshazzar, on the governorship of Quirinius, &c.—all now corroborated by research and scholarship. Sargon claims in his inscription to be the conqueror of Samaria, but the impression given by the Bible narrative (2 Kings xvii. 3-6)—though that interpretation is by no means necessary—is that the conqueror was Shalmaneser. Now it appears that, after all, Shalmaneser *was* probably the conqueror of Samaria.*

I take an example of "discrepancy" cited in a recent able work in proof that

OUR LORD'S AUTHORITY

is not to be extended to His statements about the Old Testament. "Let us test this," the writer says, "by a simple case. He speaks of the drought in the days of Elijah as lasting three years and six months. The same statement is made in the Epistle of James (Luke iv. 25; Jas. vi. 17). But in the First Book of Kings we are told that the rain came 'in the third year' (1 Kings xviii. 1), which would make the drought about two years and a-half, possibly less. How are we to explain the discrepancy?" Even if, as the author supposes, Jesus was simply following here a current Jewish reckoning,† it would not trouble me, for such cases undoubtedly occur (see below). But, as a "test" case, the example is unfortunate, for there is no need for assuming any discrepancy. It is forgotten that in Palestine rain is not an everyday occurrence, as it is with us. The ground had

* *Interpreter*, April, 1906, p. 316.

† I much doubt the explanation of Plummer and others that "ever since the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes, three years and a-half (equals 42 months, equals 1,260 days) had become the traditional duration of times of great calamity."

already been dry for six months—since the previous rainy season—when Elijah stayed the rain by his word at the commencement of the new rainy season. If the cessation lasted till the third year thereafter, the total period of drought would necessarily be about three years and six months.* It was strictly true, therefore, that, as Jesus said, "in the days of Elijah," "the heaven was shut up three years and six months" (Luke vi. 25).

Another instance,

TYPICAL OF MANY,

may be taken from the Old Testament. The critics urge that Deut. x. 3, according to which Moses himself made the ark before his second ascent of the mount, is in palpable contradiction to the narrative in Exod. xxvii. 1*ff*, xxxvii. 1*ff*, where we are told that Moses received elaborate instructions for the making of the ark during his first sojourn on the mount, and that these were carried out by Bezaleel after his second descent. There is, however, no real discrepancy between Exodus and Deuteronomy on the matter. Moses, in Deuteronomy, at the distance of forty years, and in the freedom of hortatory speech, mentions the making of the ark as a receptacle for the tables without regard to chronology, and it is pedantic to understand him otherwise. Can anyone suppose, in view of the narrative in Ex. xxxiv. 1-4, which Deuteronomy admittedly follows, that the writer actually intended to convey that Moses literally, and with his own hands, constructed an ark of acacia wood in the interval between his receiving the command to hew the tables (ver. 1)—

* "It is certainly correct," says Huther, "as Benson remarks, that if the rain, according to the word of Elias, was stayed at the beginning of the rainy season, and it again began to rain in the third year at the end of the summer season, the drought would continue in all three and a-half years," (*Com.* on James V., 17.) Huther himelf prefers to see "error" in James.

itself no slight work—and his rising up early the next morning to ascend the mount (vers. 3, 4)? My imagination is not equal to the effort.*

A real difficulty lies in the

LARGE NUMBERS

frequently met with in the books of the Old Testament—in Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles. Some of these may be accounted for, as already seen, by corruption of the numbers; some by the use of round numbers (see below), and of large totals intended to convey a general idea where precise enumeration was not possible. *E.g.*, the accounts of David's census of Israel and Judah in 2 Sam. xxiv. and 1 Chron. xxi. are evidently taken from the same original—yet the numbers in Samuel (ver. 9) are 800,000 warriors for Israel and 500,000 for Judah; in Chronicles (ver. 5) 1,100,000 for Israel and 470,000 for Judah. One is tempted here to suppose corruption, as in so many places elsewhere; or there may be a designed change from some motive not known to us. Still, the enormous totals (Cf. 1 Kings xii. 21 = 2 Chron. xi. 1; 2 Chron. xiii. 3, 17; xiv. 8, 9; xvii, 14*ff*; xxvi. 13, &c.) are not readily explained, and the expedients sometimes suggested for reducing the numbers have not much probability.

Perhaps the best defence of the numbers is that they are uniformly so large. Every account and enumeration we have implies a population of unusual density, and

VERY LARGE MUSTER-ROLLS

of the males fit for war. It is remarkable that Dr. Flinders Petrie, in his *Researches in Sinai*, while advocating a method of reducing the numbers of the Israelites at

* For similar examples see *Problem of O.T.*, pp. 278-9.

the exodus which I think untenable, yet defends in the main the large numbers of the later books, especially of Judges (pp. 219-20). He upholds the figures in the wars of Barak and Gideon (Judg. iv. viii.), and says: "The last great fight before the monarchy, the civil with Benjamin, demands a roll-call of 426,000 of all Israel. . . . One in ten of Israel are said to have been levied, or 40,000, to fight 26,000 of Benjamin. The extermination of a defeated tribe under these conditions is not surprising. The only figures that we need set aside are those of the 22,000 and 18,000 Israelites who were slain [yet why, in so fierce a war of extermination?] . . . But the totals of men involved, and the catastrophe which befell the tribe are not surprising" (p. 220).*

III.

To obtain just views on this whole subject, and perceive more clearly

ITS RELATIONS TO INSPIRATION,

we need to go a little deeper, and ask ourselves more distinctly how inspiration, on any view we may take of it, is related to the form of the record in Holy Scripture. On this point a good deal of ambiguity and misunderstanding exists, which it is desirable, if possible, to remove.

*Dr. Petrie's methods are somewhat arbitrary, but his general conclusions are sound. "Now we have seen," he says, "how much there is in the general cry about the great exaggerations of the numbers of the priestly writer in Judges. So far as what may be called national documents go, there is nothing impossible. . . . The question of the setting of the history, of the editing of it, and the introduction of collateral records and traditions, is quite outside of our scope here. But we see that the supposed discredit of it as being radically encumbered with exaggeration is quite untrue, and that there are no large numbers which disagree with the known conditions of the history" (p. 220).

The phrase "verbal inspiration" is sometimes understood as if it were equivalent to a direct or mechanical "dictation" of the very words of inspired Scripture to its several authors. Conclusions are then drawn from this idea by opponents which, it is safe to say, no intelligent upholder of the inspiration of the Bible would consent to be bound by.

I myself, partly for this reason, prefer to speak of a

"PLENARY" INSPIRATION

—plenary for the end for which inspiration is given, that is, viewing Scripture as a whole, the imparting in a complete and infallible way of the mind of the Spirit on the great subjects of God's revelation.* It is by this time a commonplace with writers on inspiration of all schools that the action of the Spirit does not suspend or annul the natural workings of the human faculties, but quickens, exalts, and uses these to the fullest degree in the communication, orally, or in writing, of the divine message. The books of the Bible show as clearly the marks of the individuality and genius of their human authors as they do of the mind of the Spirit expressed through them. When we trace further this action of the Spirit in relation to the form of the record, we get much light that is of use to us on the subject of "discrepancies."

To make my point clear at once, let anyone ask himself in what precise sense he uses the phrase "verbal inspiration" in regard to

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD.

The first three evangelists have a great deal of common matter, and report in many places the same sayings and

*I say, taking Scripture as a whole, for necessarily the various parts of Scripture are relative to the age and stage of revelation to which they belong, and the earlier parts show the incompleteness of the earlier stages.

discourses of Jesus. Yet, as everyone knows, while they often agree verbally, in a far larger number of cases their reports show considerable variation of expression. It is not simply that one report is longer or shorter than another, but, while the idea is the same, the words used to express the idea are often widely different.

AS INSTANCES,

take the following from Matthew and Luke. In Matthew Jesus says: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake" (Matt. v. 11). Luke reports the same saying: "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you [from their company], and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake" (Luke vi. 22). Matthew reads: "And be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" &c. (Matt. x. 28, 29). Luke gives this saying: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear; Fear him, which after He have killed hath power to cast into hell; Yea, I say unto you, fear Him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?" &c. (Luke xii. 5, 6). Matthew gives the saying: "There be some of them that stand here which shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom" (Matt. xvi. 28). Mark gives the latter part of this utterance; "Till they see the Kingdom of God come with power" (Mark ix. 1), and Luke yet more simply: "Till they see the Kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 27) So constantly.

Now it is perfectly obvious that in all these passages the thought or meaning is

ABSOLUTELY THE SAME,

but it is just as obvious that the form of expressing the thought varies, and that Jesus did not use both forms of expression at one and the same time. It is a difference in the mode of reporting the same thing.* We see plainly, therefore, that it is the thought or idea about which inspiration is chiefly concerned, and not the precise words in which that idea is conveyed, though, of course, in Christ's case, the words are in substance the same also. "Verbal inspiration" can mean here only that the words are a perfectly accurate medium for conveying the meaning intended; not that they are always literally and exactly the very words Christ used, in the precise form in which He used them. This principle of itself is a solvent of many of the alleged discrepancies in the Gospel, *e.g.*, in the case of the varying forms of the titles on the Cross (Matt. xxvii. 37; Mark xv. 26; Luke xxiii. 38; John xix. 19).

IV.

A quite similar lesson is taught by another class of phenomena; I refer to the

QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

in the New. Some 250 of these are reckoned.† There is great diversity in the mode of quotation—sometimes more exactly in agreement with the Hebrew; sometimes in freer paraphrase, or with unessential modifications; in

* I discard the idea favoured by some of the wilful manipulation of the text from a "tendency" motive. Cf. Rev. D. Smith, *The Days of His Flesh*, Introd. p. xxiii.

† If repetitions are excluded, the number is reduced to about 136.

the great majority of cases, from the Greek version known as the Septuagint, but here also often with considerable liberty. In many cases the Greek version is followed where it deviates from the Hebrew in important respects. As examples, in Matt. ii. 5, 6, "And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah," &c., the differences are very considerable both from the Hebrew and from the Septuagint (these have "Bethlehem Ephrathah." Cf. Mic. v. 2). In Matt. xii. 17-21 we have, with other changes, the adoption of the Septuagint rendering, "In His name shall the Gentiles hope," for the Hebrew, "The isles shall wait for His law" (Is. xlii. 1-4). In Rom. ix. 33 and 1 Pet. ii. 6, the Septuagint is followed in rendering the last clause of Is. xxviii. 16, "Shall not be put to shame," where the Hebrew has "shall not make haste." To take only one other case. In Heb. x. 5-7 the Septuagint, as usual in this epistle, is followed, even in the rendering of Ps. xl. 6, "A body hast thou prepared me," where the original has, "Mine ears hast thou opened" (digged).

In brief, the sacred writers took their quotations from this Greek version (the one familiar to their readers), where it served in

ILLUSTRATION OF THEIR MAIN POINT,

without troubling themselves, except in special cases, with its greater or less precision of rendering in detail. Inspiration, as before, shows itself concerned with the thought, not with the precise form of words used to express it.

An older writer, Dr. Patrick Fairbairn, has some sensible remarks on this subject, which I may venture to quote. After observing that "in none of the cases are we presented with a different sense, but simply with a modified representation of the same sense," he proceeds: "It is, therefore, a groundless and unwarranted application to make of these occasional departures from the exact import of the original, when they are employed

as an argument against the plenary inspiration of Scripture. . . . Even in those cases in which, for anything we can see, a closer translation would have served equally well the purpose of the writer, it may have been worthy of the inspiring Spirit, and perfectly consistent with the fullest inspiration of the original Scriptures, that the sense should be given in a free current translation. . . . The stress occasionally laid in the New Testament upon particular words in passages of the Old sufficiently proves what a value attaches to the very form of the divine communications. . . . It shows that God's words are pure words, and that, if fairly interpreted, they cannot be too closely pressed. But in other cases, when nothing depended upon a rigid adherence to the letter, the practice of the sacred writers, not scrupulously to stickle about this, but to give prominence simply to the substance of the revelation is fraught with an important lesson, since it teaches us that the letter is valuable only for the truth couched in it, and that the one is no further prized and contended for, than may be required for the exhibition of the other." *

A third group of cases of interest in this connection are those which relate to the use of

ROUND AND INDEFINITE NUMBERS.

Without accepting the principle of systematised numbers to the extent to which some would carry it, we must recognise that the use of round or indefinite numbers, where the precise figure, perhaps, was not known, is a not uncommon fact in Scripture. "Forty" is a favourite round number of this kind, as seen, *e.g.*, from its frequent use in the Book of Judges (Judg. iii. 11, 30 [40×2 = 80] ; v. 31 ; viii. 28, &c.). Where it is intended to express that the whole armed force of the nation is called out, or that

* *Hermeneutical Manual*, pp. 412-14.

an army is half destroyed, large round numbers, based on census lists, or current enumerations, are employed. This seems the simplest way of explaining such very large figures—which it is impossible to take literally—as in 2 Chron. xiii. 3, 17.

This principle rules in another way—in giving a certain technical or artificial form to

GENEALOGIES AND LISTS.

Thus the list of the seventy souls that went down to Egypt in Gen. xlvi. 8-27 (described in Ex. i. 5 as "all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob") embraces Jacob himself, Er and Onan, who died in Canaan, represented by Hezron and Hamul (ver. 12; these were born in Egypt), and Joseph's two sons, expressly stated to have been born in Egypt (ver. 27). In our Lord's genealogy in Matt. i. the names are given in three "fourteens" (ver. 17); yet, to make the second "fourteen," three names of kings have to be omitted.

A chronological difficulty is sometimes found in Paul's statement in Acts xiii. 20: "After that He gave them judges, about the space of 450 years, until Samuel the prophet" (A.V.), which conflicts with the 480 years given in 1 Kings vi. 1 as the period from the Exodus till the founding of Solomon's temple. The discrepancy might, if it were real, be solved on the above principle of the adoption of a current reckoning, where precise enumeration is not intended. In reality, the difficulty disappears with the true reading: "He gave them their land for an inheritance for about 450 years; and after these things He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet" (R.V.). The allusion in the passage is probably to the very reckoning in 1 Kings vi. 1.

V.

Let me now take a class of cases of a different kind. Many of the books of the Bible are

COMPILATIONS FROM OLDER RECORDS.

They use, and in some cases embody, materials derived from uninspired sources—*e.g.*, the letters of the Persian Kings embodied in the Book of Ezra, portions of State chronicles, genealogies, tribal lists, &c.; but they also embody older prophetic histories and biographies (Cf. 1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. ix. 29; xii. 15; xiii. 22; xxvi. 22, &c.). Some of these documents had been handed down for centuries, and doubtless had suffered in the usual way in the process of copying and transmission. What relation does inspiration sustain to such materials? Is its function ended in their faithful reproduction and use as given, for the purpose intended by the Spirit of God? Or does it lie with inspiration to supply all defects, correct all corruptions in names and numbers, check mistaken readings, and the like? It will be very difficult to maintain that it does.

Perhaps an illustration from Matthew Henry, whose devotion to Scripture, even in its letter, will not be gainsaid, may set this matter in a clearer light. He is speaking of

THE GENEALOGIES IN CHRONICLES,

with special reference to 1 Chron. viii. 1-32. "As to the difficulties," he says, that occur in this and the foregoing genealogies we need not perplex ourselves. I presume Ezra took them as he found them in the books of the Kings of Israel and Judah (chap. ix. 1), according as they were given in by the several tribes, each observing what method they thought fit. Hence some ascend,

others descend; some have numbers affixed, others places; some have historical remarks intermixed, others have not; some are shorter, others longer; some agree with other records, others differ; some, it is likely, were torn, erased, and blotted, others more legible. Those of Dan and Reuben were entirely lost. This holy man wrote as he was moved of the Holy Ghost; but there was no necessity for the making up of the defects, no, nor for the rectifying of the mistakes of these genealogies by inspiration. It was sufficient that he copied them out as they came to hand, or so much of them as was requisite for the present purpose, which was the directing of the returned captives to settle as nearly as they could with those of their own family, and in the place of their former residence." *

In such cases, as I have ventured to remark elsewhere,† inspiration does not create the materials of its record, but works with those it has received. In strictness, the providing and preserving of sound historical material for the sacred record is

THE WORK OF PROVIDENCE

rather than that of inspiration; and a wonderful providence it has been. For instance, Luke appeals for the trustworthiness of his Gospel, not to his inspiration, but to the fact of his "having traced the course of all things accurately from the first," "even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses of the word" (Luke i. 1-3). Inspiration is a free, living force which informs and moulds the material thus received for the ends which God designs in His written Word.

* *Com. in loc.*

† Cf. *Problem of O.T.*, p. 486.

VI.

On the principle now stated one might easily explain the appearances of discrepancy occasionally met with in the narratives of the Gospels, without detracting in any way from the reality of inspiration—*e.g.*, as to whether Bartimæus was cured by Jesus on His going into, or His coming out of, Jericho (Cf. Matt. xx. 29, 30 : Mark x. 46 ; Luke xviii. 35). Such cases, however, seem to me to be perfectly explicable on other, and more probable lines. They belong to that part of the synoptic tradition which may be supposed to have assumed a fixed form while yet the Apostles were labouring together in Jerusalem, and it is *a priori* highly unlikely that the statements in the different evangelists are actually discrepant. I would conclude, therefore, with a few remarks on certain principles which apply to the alleged

DISCREPANCIES IN THE GOSPELS.

Many of these so-called "discrepancies," as already seen, are not real. It is not a real discrepancy if a saying is reported, or an incident related, in slightly varying language ; or if one narrative is fuller than another, or gives details which another omits ; or if it presents incidents from a different point of view. It is not a true discrepancy, *e.g.*, if Matthew tells of two demoniacs at Gadara (Matt. viii. 28), while Mark and Luke speak only of one (Mark v. 2 ; Luke viii. 27) ; or if Matthew speaks of two blind men at Jericho (Matt. xx. 30), while Mark and Luke again tell only of one (Mark x. 46 ; Luke xviii. 35). As Matthew Henry, in his quaint way, puts it : "If there were two, there was one" (on Mark v. 1*ff*).

A letter comes in as I write which affords an interesting illustration of this very point. In Huxley's *Darwiniana*

the Professor makes two references in different papers as to the origin of the breed of Ancon sheep. Here are the two passages :—

At pp. 38, 39 : " With the 'cuteness characteristic of their nation, the neighbours of the Massachussetts farmer imagined that it would be an excellent thing if all his sheep were imbued with the stay-at-home tendencies enforced by nature on the newly-arrived ram, and they advised Wright to kill the old patriarch of his fold, and instal the Ancon ram in his place. The result justified their sagacious anticipations."

At p. 409 : " It *occurred to Seth Wright*, who was, like his successors, more or less 'cute, that if *he* could get a stock of sheep like those with the bandy legs, they would not be able to jump over the fences so readily ; and he acted upon that idea " (italics mine).

My correspondent suggests this as a parallel to the alleged " discrepancy " between Deut. i. 9*ff*, and Ex. xviii. (Cf. my *Prob. of O.T.*, p. 278) ; but it is quite as applicable to many of the so-called " discrepancies " of the Gospels.*

One principle which explains at least some of the apparent discrepancies in the Gospels is that of occasional

"GROUPING."

There seems no doubt that, having regard to the spirit rather than to the exact letter of their narratives, the Evangelists in certain instances allow themselves the freedom of grouping or combining their material. In the discourses this is commonly allowed. In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, *e.g.*, long passages are brought together, which in Luke are found in quite different connections (Cf. Matt. vi. 9-13 ; Luke xi. 1-4 ; Matt. vi. 25-33;

*Good illustrations, with pertinent remarks, may be seen in Ebrard's *Gospel History*, pp. 59, 60.

Luke xii. 22-31; Matt. vii. 7-11; Luke xi. 9-13). No doubt Jesus repeated many sayings at different times and places: but in part there is plainly a grouping of like material where occasion offers.

The same applies to the incidents. This is probably, *e.g.*, the real explanation of the diversity in the accounts of

THE CURE OF THE BLIND MEN,

on the occasion of Christ's visit to Jericho. Luke narrates the cure of a blind man as Jesus "drew nigh" to Jericho (Luke xviii. 35-43); Mark narrates the cure of blind Bartimæus (naming him) as Jesus "went out" from Jericho (Mark x. 46-52); Matthew gives the story of the cure of two blind men as Jesus leaves Jericho (Matt. xx. 30-34). The accounts of the cure in the three cases are very similar. It is simplest to suppose that there were really two cures—one at the entering, the other at the leaving, of the city—and that Matthew's account is the synopsis of the two.

Much difficulty has often been felt in regard to the harmonising of

THE TWO GENEALOGIES OF JESUS.

These are found, one in Matt. i. 1-18, the other in Luke iii. 23-38 (one descending, the other ascending), and they vary completely after the mention of David. They are both, in form, genealogies of Joseph, but they plainly represent quite different lines of descent. We must assume, therefore—holding them, as we do, for genuine—that they are constructed on different principles. The view has often been advanced in modern times that one is the genealogy of Joseph (Matt.), the other the genealogy of Mary (Luke); but most scholars now reject this as contrary to the fair meaning of the text. Yet, in reality,

if not in form, there is every probability that the genealogy of Mary is involved. The supposition which has most likelihood is that, as Lord A. Hervey, in his work on the subject, argues, the genealogy in Matthew represents the legal, that in Luke the natural descent of Joseph. Both appear to touch in Matthan or Matthat—the grandfather of Joseph—and here we may naturally suppose that the key to the solution lies. Jacob is the son of Matthan in Matthew's list (i. 15); Heli is the son of Matthat in Luke's (iii. 24). If we suppose Jacob to have had no sons, but only a daughter, Mary, whom Joseph, the son of Heli, married, then Joseph, as next of kin in the male line, became (on Matthew's principle) the son of Jacob, and legal heir to the throne.* Mary and Joseph, on this view, were related as cousins.

The only other example I take is that of the alleged discrepancies in connection with

THE NARRATIVES OF THE RESURRECTION.

The accounts of the Resurrection of Jesus in the four Gospels are declared by many to be perfectly irreconcilable.† Is this certain? I am far from thinking so, if the narratives are treated in a reasonable way. The resurrection day was one of great excitement. Events and experiences were mingled, grouped, blended in a

*Dr. Patrick Fairbairn, in a judicious discussion of this subject, says: "We have the best reason for supposing that the relationship of Mary, immediately to Joseph, and remotely to the house of David, was such, and so well known, that the genealogy of the one, at a point comparatively near, was understood to be the genealogy also of the other" (*Hermen. Manual*, p. 189).

†Rev. D. Smith goes so far as to say in his *The Days of His Flesh* that "in their accounts of the Resurrection the Synoptic narratives, elsewhere so remarkable accordant, bristle with discrepancies which refuse to be harmonised even by the most violent expedients" (p. xxxvi.).

way which no one who was not an eye-witness, like John, would venture afterwards to attempt to disentangle ; the different evangelists give outstanding names and facts, without pretending to furnish complete or detailed accounts; in default of more precise knowledge, their statements are more or less generalised. John, alone, probably for the very end of giving greater precision to certain events in which he was concerned, furnishes a clear and consecutive statement.

Yet through the whole the

MAIN FACTS

stand out clearly. The early visit of the women to the sepulchre (Mary Magdalene grouped with the rest, though in reality she may have gone earlier) ; the stone rolled away; the vision of the angels and their message (the appearances to the women and to Mary Magdalene again grouped in the narrative of Luke) ; the going to tell the disciples (Mary's going and that of the other women grouped again). John makes the order of events a good deal clearer. Mary Magdalene probably arrived first, it may be with the other Mary as companion (Cf. the "we" in John xx. 2)—the rest of the women coming somewhat later—but on seeing the stone rolled away she immediately fled and told Peter, returning in the wake of Peter and John to the tomb. Then followed the vision of angels, and the meeting with Jesus in the garden : according to Mark xvi. 9 (an addition to the Gospel, based here on John), Christ's first appearance. Meanwhile, the other women had received the angel's message, and departed, filled with fear, joy, and amazement. One point on which real difficulty rests is—whether the appearance of Jesus to the women in Matt. xxviii. 8, 9, is a distinct event, or whether, as some think, the passage is to be taken as simply a generalised state-

ment of the single appearance to Mary Magdalene recorded by John. It seems most naturally to refer to a distinct or second appearance of Jesus. If so, then somewhat more time must have elapsed during or after the women's visit to the sepulchre than we should otherwise have supposed: time to allow of Mary's return, and of Christ's appearance to her. Possibly Mary overtook the others on their way back, and all told the apostles together.

The events of the resurrection morning thus do

FIT INTO EACH OTHER

better than the ordinary catalogue of minute "discrepancies" would suggest. It is at least an exaggeration to say: "It is hardly too much to affirm that, as they [the Synoptic narratives] stand, they agree only in their unfaltering and triumphant proclamation of the fact that Jesus rose and appeared to His disciples" (Smith, p. xxxvi.).

XII

The Bible the Hope of the World

The Bible the Hope of the World

IT was remarked in the first paper that the best proof of the inspiration of the Bible is the spiritual effects which it produces. These are of a character

WRIT LARGE

on the page of history. Moses extolled the unique privilege of Israel in having "statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law" (Deut. iv. 8). Psalmists celebrate in glowing terms the spiritual power of God's "law" in converting, enlightening, sanctifying, comforting, and guiding the soul (Pss. i., xix. 7-11; cxix). Paul counts it the chief privilege of his nation that "they were entrusted with the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 2). The same apostle declares that the Old Testament Scriptures which Timothy possessed were "able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," and that, as "inspired of God," they were profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, "that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. iii. 15-17).

The New Testament Scriptures have since been added to the Old, and we have now in our hands a complete Bible. Few will maintain that the inspiration of the New Testament falls beneath that of the Old, or that

the spiritual powers its teachings exert are less wonderful than those of the earlier Scriptures.

The claim made for the Bible is one that can be

PUT TO THE TEST.

The Bible influences the world through the many-sided revelations of God's character and will it contains; it specially influences it through the historical image, and the moral and spiritual teaching, of Christ in the Gospels, and through the hopes, promises, exhortations, and motives, in which the Apostolic writings abound. We speak with gratitude of the profound influence which has been exercised on the world by Christianity. But it is to be remembered that Christianity only comes to men, and is kept alive in their memories and hearts, through the Bible—through the possession, translation, diffusion, and devout and prayerful reading, preaching, study, and teaching of the written Word. Without the Bible to revert to,

KEEPING THE TRUTH FRESH AND LIVING,

the image of the Master would long since have been blurred and distorted beyond recognition. His Gospel would have been perverted beyond recovery by corrupt human tradition. His doctrines and moral teaching, with those of His Apostles, would have been buried under a mountain-load of human inventions.

It is not, therefore, an exaggeration to say that it is the Bible which has

PRESERVED CHRISTIANITY

to the world. If, as we believe, the religion of Jesus is the hope of the world, it is the possession of the Bible conveying and maintaining the knowledge of that religion, which makes the hope possible. In saying that Christianity is the hope of the world, and that the Bible

is the hope of the world, we use nearly equivalent expressions.

I.

A powerful argument for the divineness of the Bible might be drawn from a simple comparison of the Bible with

THE SACRED BOOKS OF OTHER RELIGIONS.

There is a large group of religions in the world which students of the subject are accustomed to designate "book-religions"—this for the reason that they possess, like our own, sacred books or scriptures. Such books are the Hindu Vedas, the Parsee Zend-Avesta, the Tripitakas and other sacred writings of the Buddhists, the Mohammedan Koran. Whatever light of wisdom, or gleams of truth about God and duty such books contain—and we need grudge to them no real "gems" of this kind they possess—there is, as every candid judge will be ready to admit, no true comparison between these ethnic scriptures, even at their best, and the collection of writings which we term pre-eminently the Bible—*the* Book. Whether regarded as literature, as history, or in the message they convey, the unique superiority of the Bible stands out unchallengeable.

Take the Bible, for instance,

AS HISTORY.

It is the simple fact that there is nothing that can be properly called history in these other sacred books of the world. They are, as every student of them knows, for the most part jumbles of heterogeneous material, loosely placed together, without order, continuity, or unity of any kind. There is no order, progress, or real connection of parts. The Koran, *e.g.*, is a miscellany of disjointed pieces, loosely placed together, arranged chiefly in order

of length. The Bible, on the other hand, is a history with a beginning, a middle, and an end; a history of revelation; the history of a developing purpose of God, working up to a goal in the full-orbed discovery of the will of God for man's salvation in His Son Jesus Christ. There is nothing like this, nothing even approaching it, in any other collection of sacred books in the world.

As distinctive in its character is

THE MESSAGE

of the Bible. The Bible is not a book of mere secular wisdom, though much secular knowledge is embodied in it; not a book merely of grand thoughts about religion, or of theories and speculations about divine things; not a book simply of fine ethical teaching, of noble biography, of soul-stirring narrative. It is, as just said, pre-eminently a book of revelation; of God's historic revelations down through the ages to the coming of Christ and the advent of the Spirit. These revelations form a series. Each adds something to those which went before; each carries the course of revelation a little further; each foreshadows a yet richer development in the future; and when the whole is before us, we see in it the unfolding of a great purpose which has its consummation in Christ and His redemption—a purpose the very character of which is the guarantee to us that it is the purpose of God, not the thought of man.

II.

This imperfect glance suffices to show the uniqueness of the Bible, and the inestimable treasure we possess in it. We are now to see how the Bible

VERIFIES ITS EXCEPTIONAL CHARACTER

and claims by its history and influence, and by the blessings it confers.

The Bible the Hope of the World

It is not too much to say that the Bible, regarded simply as a book, has had an

UNEXAMPLED PLACE IN HISTORY.

Its authors were not learned men, as the world counts learning; yet their writings have been preserved, read, copied, translated, and spread abroad to the utmost corners of the earth, as no works of philosophers or sages, poets or orators, historians or moralists, have ever been. Take the witness of manuscripts. While of some important classical works only one manuscript is known to exist, and ten or fifteen is thought a large number for others—few of these dating beyond the tenth century of our era—the manuscripts of whole or parts of the New Testament are already reckoned by thousands, the oldest of which go back to the fourth and fifth centuries, and parts are still older.

Or take the

TEST OF TRANSLATION

as a mark of this book's influence. It is no uncommon thing for a popular book to be translated into many languages. Here, again, however, the Bible has a record which casts every other into the shade. The books of the New Testament had hardly been put together in the second century in what we call the Canon before we find translations made of them into Latin and Syriac and Egyptian, and by-and-by into Gothic and other barbarous tongues. In the Middle Ages, notwithstanding the discouragements put upon the possession and reading of the Scriptures, we find translations made into nearly all the leading languages of Europe. With the art of printing the work of translation received a new impetus. To-day there is not a language in the civilised world, hardly a language among uncivilised tribes of any importance, into which this marvellous book has not been

rendered. Whatever men may say of decay of faith in the Bible, it is, as remarked earlier, the undeniable fact that its circulation in the different countries and languages of the world to-day outstrips all previous records. The reports, *e.g.*, of the three great Bible Societies—the British and Foreign, the American, and the National Bible Society of Scotland—show for the year 1905 the enormous total of over 9,000,000 of issues of the whole or parts of the Scriptures in European and heathen lands!

EVERY OTHER TEST

we can apply to the Bible yields a similar result. No book has ever been so minutely studied, has had so many books written on it, has given birth to so many commentaries and works of exposition, has evoked such keen discussion, has founded so vast a literature of hymns, liturgies, works of devotion, has been so determinedly assailed, has rallied such splendid defences, as the Bible!

Why do I mention these things? Not merely for their own interest as facts, but as proofs of the

UNCONQUERABLE VITALITY

which resides in this book, of the universal appeal it makes to human hearts, and of the need of ascribing the power it exercises to some higher than natural cause. Genius alone in the writers, even if they were allowed to take rank as men of genius, would not explain it. What boasts are sometimes made of the genius and scholarship ranged against the Bible! Yet, as I said at the commencement, the Bible holds on its career of conquest unchecked, while the works of its assailants, after a generation or two—often much less time—lie on the shelves unread. These books have no message to the world, as the Bible has. The Bible is a book, as experience shows, for all races; and it has this character

because, like the Gospel it enshrines, it goes down beneath all differences of rank, age, sex, culture, to that which is deepest, most universal in man. It bears translation into all languages, because the language of the deepest things of the soul is, all the world over, one.

This

VITAL PENETRATIVE CHARACTER OF THE BIBLE,

attesting its divine quality, shows itself not simply in the place it holds in history, but in the unexampled character of the influence it has been enabled to exert. To tell what the Bible has been and done for the world would be to rewrite in large part the history of modern civilisation; to re-tell the story of Christian missions, including those which brought the Gospel to our own shores; to extract the finest qualities in much of our best literature; to lay bare the inner springs of the lives of those who have laboured best and most for the moral and spiritual well-being of their kind. Trace back to their springs the great movements, the great struggles for civil and religious liberty, in our own and other lands, the social and humanitarian movements which were the distinction of the past century, the sources will be found ultimately in the high mountain levels of the Bible's teaching. And say what men will, it is the Bible which is the source of our highest social and national aspirations still.

I shall return immediately, with more particularity, to the proof of these statements. But I may here cite the witness of one who will not, I think, be regarded as unduly biassed in favour of the Bible—I mean

PROFESSOR HUXLEY.

Secularist and agnostic as he was, Professor Huxley, on more than one occasion, expressed himself in very

remarkable terms on this unparalleled influence of the Bible.* Here is one of his latest utterances:—

"Throughout the history of the Western world," he says, "the Scriptures, Jewish and Christian, have been the great instigators of revolt against the worst forms of clerical and political despotism. The Bible has been the Magna Charta of the poor, and of the oppressed; down to modern times no State has had a constitution in which the interests of the people are so largely taken into account, in which the duties, so much more than the privileges, of rulers are insisted upon, as that drawn up for Israel in Deuteronomy and Leviticus; nowhere is the fundamental truth that the welfare of the State, in the long run, depends on the uprightness of the citizen so strongly laid down. Assuredly the Bible talks no trash about the rights of man; but it insists upon the equality of duties, on the liberty to bring about that righteousness which is somewhat different from struggling for 'rights'; on the fraternity of taking thought for one's neighbour as for one's self."†

Here is another passage. Arguing in one of his essays for the reading of the Bible in the schools, Professor Huxley bids us consider "that for three centuries this Book has been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history; that it has become the national epic of Britain . . . that it is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of mere literary form"; and he asks, "By the study of what other book could children be so much humanised, and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between two eternities, and

* The attention of Mr. Blatchford and his friends, who republish Huxley as wholly on their side, may be directed to these passages.

† *Essays Upon Some Controverted Questions.* Prologue, pp. 52-3.

earns the blessings or the curses of all times, according to its efforts to do good and hate evil, even as they also are earning their payment for their work?"*

Are not statements like these the best reply to such strictures on the "narrowness" of the Christian ethics as we had before us in a previous paper? Can a religion be really regarded as inimical to political freedom, to duties of citizenship, to education, to patriotism, which produces results like the above?

III.

Let me now trace a little more in detail some of

THE ACTUAL BLESSINGS

which the world owes to the Bible. For practical purposes, the influence of the Bible and the influence of Christianity are, as I have said, convertible ideas. It will be convenient for me to speak, first, of what the world owes to the religion of Christ in a temporal respect —on the plane of moral and social benefit; then of what the world owes to it in a spiritual respect, or in regard to its eternal hopes.

There are, I know very well, and we are never allowed to forget it,

TWO SIDES TO THIS PICTURE.

Deeds have been done in the name of Christ, and of His official Church, which reflect eternal dishonour upon humanity. It is a dark picture the historian has to draw of the abounding corruption, the dead formalism, the gross immorality of certain ages of the Church; of the frightful evils of the periods of Roman and Byzantine ascendency; of the spirit of intolerance and persecution directed against heretics and unbelievers, and often

**Critiques and Addresses*, p. 61.

against Christ's own faithful witnesses, when truth had to be confessed in peril of the dungeon and the stake; of superstitions like witchcraft; of the feuds and divisions of churches and sects; of the moral blots, the inconsistencies, the festering sores of vice and misery, of our so-called Christian civilisations.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE IT ALL,

and blush in the acknowledgment. To dwell on such things is the stock in trade of the anti-Christian agitator. But in this he is unjust. A fair mind will always distinguish—or try to distinguish—between effects really due to the spirit and principles of Christ's religion, and the false and perverted readings of that religion given by those who had nothing in common with its spirit, and made it too often the engine of their own temporal ambitions. Much human infirmity and folly must be stripped off if we are to do justice to this religion as it lies before us in the Bible. Mr. Blatchford's formerly-quoted words: "If to praise Christ in words, and deny Him in deeds, be Christianity," is not the definition we would accept of Christianity.* To Christ Himself we appeal, as against the people who deny Him.

If, then, we look to the Gospel as it came forth in its purity from

THE LIPS OF CHRIST HIMSELF AND OF HIS APOSTLES,

what do we find it teaching? What ideas did it communicate to the world? I look at the subject, first, as proposed, from the standpoint of moral and social benefit.

To understand what the religion of the Bible has accomplished, we have to think of the kind of world

* *God and My Neighbour.* Pref. p. ix.

into which Christianity entered. It found a world in the

LAST STAGE OF DISSOLUTION—

in a state of utter decrepitude and decay. The old religions had lost their power, and with religion the foundations of morals were well nigh universally loosened. Dissoluteness flooded society. Even duty to the State—the one duty that was held supreme—was breaking up in all directions. There was little sense of individual right. In the family, *e.g.*, the father held all power in his own hands, and wife, and children, and slaves, were subject to his absolute authority. Infanticide and exposure of children were common and recognised practices. The

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

was built on slavery, and slaves had no protection of any kind. Work was held to be beneath the dignity of citizens, who, if not possessed of wealth, claimed to be supported by the State. The favourite amusements of the populace were the sanguinary spectacles of the amphitheatre. Marriage had fallen into such disuse that, though the emperors set a premium on marriage, people could hardly be induced to enter into the bond. Worse than all, heathen society had not within itself—nor was it able to find—any principle of regeneration, for religion had lost its hold, the moral codes of the philosophers were without sufficient sanction, and there were not those ideas of the dignity and worth of the individual which could create any noble or sustained efforts on his behalf. Noble examples of virtue, no doubt, there still were; friendship, piety of a sort, family affections, a deploring on the part of the better spirits of the evils they could do nothing to check or subdue. But ancient civilisation had played itself out in both

thought and life, and had not a spring of renewal from which recovery could come.

What now did Christianity bring to this

EFFETE AND CORRUPT AND SINKING HEATHENISM ?

It brought for one thing a totally new idea of man himself as a being of infinite dignity and immortal worth. It taught that every man, as made in God's image, and capable of eternal life, had an infinite value—a value which made it worth while God's own Son dying for him. It taught that no man was worthless in God's sight; that every man, however lost in sin, was redeemable, and that no efforts should be spared for his redemption. It brought back the well-nigh lost sense of responsibility and accountability to God. It breathed into the world a new spirit of love and charity—something wonderful in the eyes of the heathen, who looked on in amazement as they saw institutions growing up around them such as paganism had never heard of; institutions for the care of the poor, the orphan, the aged, the helpless, the fallen, the leper; that wealth of charitable and beneficent institutions with which Christian lands are full.* It flashed into men's souls a

NEW MORAL IDEAL,

and set up a standard of truth, integrity, and purity, which has acted as an elevating force on moral conceptions till this hour.† It restored woman to her rightful place by man's side as his spiritual helpmate and equal. It taught care for the children, and created that best of

*Cf. Lecky's *History of European Morals*, I., p. 412; II., pp. 84-91, 107. Uhlhorn s *Christian Charity in the Ancient Church*. "It has covered the globe," says Lecky, "with countless institutions of mercy, absolutely unknown in the whole pagan world" (II., p. 91; Cf., p. 107). Thirty years ago hospitals were unknown in Japan.

† Lecky, I., p. 412.

God's blessings on earth, the Christian home. It taught the slave his spiritual freedom as a member of the Kingdom of God ; gave him an equal place with his master in the Church ; and struck at the foundations of slavery by its doctrines of the natural brotherhood and dignity of man. It created self-respect, and a sense of duty in the use of one's powers for self-support and the benefit of others ; urged to honest labour ; and in a myriad ways, by direct teaching, by the protest of holy lives, and by its general spirit, struck at the evils, the corruptions, the malpractices and cruelties of the time.

In all these and in numberless other ways that cannot now be mentioned, Christianity, as impartial investigators recognise,* entered as a revolutionising, regenerating, and

RENEWING PRINCIPLE

into that ancient society, and produced effects which have borne fruit in the new world that has sprung up on the ruins of the old.

IV.

Once the ideas I have mentioned had been introduced, and had taken possession of the world, they liberated other forces, and gave birth to new ideas, which have co-operated with them in advancing the progress of the race ; but no one who goes to the bottom of what is

DISTINCTIVE OF OUR MODERN CIVILISATION

will deny that the ideas I have named are the basis on which our modern civilisation rests, and will as little deny that, however self-evident some of them may now seem to us, it was Christianity which practically put the

*Cf. Lecky, *ut supra*, Vol. II., throughout ; Brace's *Gesta Christi*, Schmid's *Social Results of Early Christianity*, &c.

world in possession of them, and still sustains them in men's minds as living convictions.

These ideas are now, in large part, as I say,

THE COMMON POSSESSION OF MANKIND.

They exist and operate far beyond the limits of the visible Church. They have been taken up and contended for by men outside the Church—unbelievers even—when the Church itself had become unfaithful to them. But none the less are they of Christian parentage. They are the principles of the Bible—of the Gospel. They lie at the basis of our modern assertion of equal rights; of rights of conscience; of justice to the individual in social and State arrangements; of the desire for brotherhood, and peace, and amity among classes and nations.* It is the Christian leaven that is fermenting, sometimes in turbid enough forms, in all this social seething we see going on around us; Christian ideas which are propelling the race on in its march of progress; Christian love which is sustaining the best, and purest, and most self-sacrificing efforts to raise the fallen, rescue the drunkard, and make the condition of the race happier and better. And if

THE CHRISTIAN ROOT OF THESE IDEAS

and efforts were withdrawn, it would soon be seen how many of them would come to be laughed at as baseless ideals, and a very different range of ideas and motives would take their place; how, in their race for riches, lust for pleasure, and greed of power, men would be willing to trample the poor and helpless under their feet, if only they could by that means raise themselves a little higher.

We thus see that, even in a temporal respect, the Bible and its teachings are

*We saw in a previous paper how Mr. Blatchford's own book, *God and My Neighbour*, is itself an inverted testimony to this.

THE GRAND CIVILISING AGENCY

of the world. The experience of the past proves it. Christian Missions, with their benign effects in the spread of education, the checking of social evils and barbarities, the creation of trade and industry, the change in the status of women, the advance in the social and civilised life generally, prove it.* We are still far enough from the goal, God knows. But contrast ancient Pagan with modern society, with all its faults, and mark how far we have already travelled; contrast Christian nations with nations yet in

THE NIGHT OF HEATHENISM

—even with such lands as India and China—and note the contrast in the life of to-day; take the Christian nations themselves, and see how it is those that have drunk most deeply into the Spirit of Christ, who most revere His word, respect His day, and observe most purely His worship, that stand foremost in all the elements that constitute true progress—foremost in enlightenment, in wealth, in virtue, in social order and happiness; take, finally, the godly and godless classes in the same society, and mark how the tone of our public life, and the stability of our institutions are strengthened by the former, and are daily put in jeopardy by the latter!

"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil" (Prov. viii. 13); and in proportion as that fear spreads itself through a community, the community will be stable, progressive, prosperous. Given a

BIBLE-READING, BIBLE-LOVING PEOPLE,

and it will not be long before such a people is found well-

*See Dr. Dennis's remarkable volume, *Christian Missions and Social Progress*.

housed, well-clothed, industrious, and content; before the demons of drink and poverty disappear from its midst; before schools and colleges spring up to educate its children; before all the tokens of a genuine prosperity are visible within its borders.

V.

Thus far I have been speaking of the temporal advantages accruing from the religion of the Bible. But the

CHIEF BLESSING

of the possession of the Bible is not told till we speak of what the world owes to it in a religious respect, and in regard to its eternal hopes. The two things are connected, for the moral reforms wrought by Christianity can never be dissociated from its religious ideas. Nothing elevates the mind or raises the affections so much as right thoughts of God. In the light of His relation to God, man attains to the sense of his dignity and worth as a moral being, and feels that life has an end which makes it worth living. The chief gain of the Bible, therefore, is still untold when we speak only of its literary, and moral, and civilising effects. It is not disclosed till we think of its message of the love of God, and that light of eternal hope which streams from it into a world which, despite all speculations of reason, and brilliance of civilisation, would be hopelessly dark as respects the future without it.

It is the Bible which gives the knowledge of God. I need not do more than lift a corner of the veil which at this distance of time hides from us the condition of

THE ANCIENT WORLD

in a religious respect. What a spectacle of ignorance of the true God and of the way of life it is which presents

itself! In one place it is the sun, moon, and planets which are the objects of worship. Elsewhere, as in Egypt, temples are built to four-footed beasts and creeping things of the earth (Cf. Rom. i. 23). In other places, as in India, the great natural objects—the sky, the dawn, the rain, the rivers, fire, &c.—are the favourite deities. In Greece men adore gods sculptured in forms of human beauty. In Rome gods of all countries are swept together, and worship is paid to them. Round the roots of these religions clung innumerable superstitions; the rites of many of them were licentious and revolting; in the service of gods of lust and gods of wine, the most shameful orgies were enacted. Where, from the list of these heathen gods, or in the stories told of them, could men get one idea to elevate them, one impulse to raise them above themselves to nobler life? When Plato sketched an ideal Republic, his first concern was to banish the myths of the gods out of it.*

Think of

OUR OWN ISLAND

at the time when the light of Christianity first broke upon it. Druid priests chant their mysterious songs, go through their mystic ceremonies in dim forest recesses, plunge the sacrificial knife into shrieking human victims. The tribes who supplant them bring over their wild Scandinavian traditions; sing the praises of Thor and Odin; revel in the prospect of a Valhalla, where they will drink blood from the skulls of their slain enemies! Look at the lands which lie even yet in the shadow of death of heathenism. See their lords many and their gods many, their cruel practices, their revolting superstitions. As every student of social progress knows, their false

**Republic* Bk. II.

religions rest on these lands with the weight of an incubus, and there can be no real progress till this incubus is shaken off.

It is the poet Milton who in his great

ODE ON THE NATIVITY

has described the dire consternation in the ranks of the heathen deities at the announcement of the birth of Christ. Christ came, and as His religion spread, the vapours of a dense heathen superstition rolled away before it, and gave place to a purer faith, and to a nobler worship. Corruption, as we know, early seized on Christianity also, and in the course of centuries attained huge proportions. But we know, too, how, from time to time, as at

THE REFORMATION,

through the force of that vitality within it, which is but another name for the abiding presence of God's Spirit in its midst, Christianity has risen up, and thrown the worst of these corruptions off, and come forth stronger and purer than before. It is the Bible which in every case has been the instrument of God's Spirit in these Reformations. It is the same Bible which has been the agency in that long series of historical Revivals by which the Church has once and again been saved in days of stagnation and unbelief. Without the Bible not one of these great changes would have been brought about.

And how

MARVELLOUS THE RESULTS!

To the Gospel of Christ we owe it that we ourselves are not to-day worshipping stocks and stones, but are bowing in acknowledgment of the one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is above all and in all. It was

Christianity that, in the early centuries, overthrew the reign of the gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome, and swept them so entirely from faith and history that no one now so much as dreams of the possibility of the revival of their worship. It was Christianity that, still retaining something of its youthful energy, laid hold of the

ROUGH, BARBARIAN PEOPLES

that overran Europe, and, with the Bible's aid, trained and moulded them to some kind of civilisation and moral life. It was Christianity that, in Scotland, lighted a light in the monasteries of Iona and other places, that by-and-by spread its beams through every part of the country. Just as to-day it is Christianity that is teaching the idolaters to burn their idols, to cease their horrid practices, to worship the true God, and take upon them the obligations of decent and civilised existence.

As it is with the knowledge of God so is it with

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

The ancient world was as much in the darkness about a future life as it was about the being and character of God, and what notions it had were perplexed, confused, and erroneous in the extreme. But Christ, as He came from God and went to God, has shed a new light into the depths of the Unseen, and, by His own Resurrection, has opened the gates of a new and assured hope to mankind (1 Pet. i. 3). The lesson of all history is that, apart from the Bible, and this hope which it contains, the world but gropes in darkness, and wanders into

DEEPER AND EVER DEEPER UNCERTAINTY,

from the scepticism in which ancient Rome and Greece ended, to the unconcealed Agnosticism, and deeper than

Agnosticism, the Pessimism, under the depressing influence of which our modern age groans.

Take a single illustration. I took up lately a

WORK OF FICTION

—a book written, its lately deceased author* tells us, "for the first time in my life wholly and solely to satisfy my own taste and my own conscience"—and this is the kind of teaching it offers. The author is speaking in his own name. "Blank pessimism," he says, "is the one creed possible for all save fools. To hold any other is to curl yourself up selfishly in your own easy chair, and say to your soul, 'O soul, eat and drink; O soul, make merry.' . . . Pessimism is sympathy; optimism is selfishness. . . . All honest art is therefore of necessity pessimistic." The close of the book describes the suicide of the heroine, and its last words are: "Her stainless soul ceased to exist for ever."

In such an

ECLIPSE OF HOPE

—and there is more of that eclipse at this hour in human minds and hearts than one sometimes realises—what can bring light to the world, but the glorious message of life and immortality through the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Look once more at heathenism. Here is an extract from a letter recently received from a young missionary

WORKING IN INDIA.

"I have had to give up the idea," he says, "of sending home impressions of heathenism. Much of it is literally indescribable, and a good deal of it too awful to describe. It does not enter into one's mind all at once that one's whole environment in a place like this is almost incredibly vile. Things have not so appalling an

* Grant Allen.

appearance on the surface, but here and there are breaks, and one gets a glimpse inside." Then follows a "counter-picture" of the changes seen in the "boys" at his Institution. "Here is a very primitive Christianity, if you like; but for pluck, frank good nature, real affection, and honest, downright fidelity (according to their lights), as widely different from heathen boys as night from day."

It is this Gospel which to-day is flooding with hope and courage

MYRIADS OF HEARTS

that would otherwise be in deepest despondency; that in India, in China, in Africa, in the New Hebrides, in every land to which it comes, in rising like a great "rose of dawn," a "dayspring from on high," fraught with hope and healing for the woes of men. But in this great work of the recovery of mankind to God, of the regeneration of the world, how absolutely indispensable is the Bible! Without it, what could the missionary,

ARM AND TONGUE PARALYSED,

accomplish? With it, even in the absence of the missionary, what wondrous changes, moral miracles even, are sometimes effected! Like seeds wafted by the wind into the crevices of hard rock, that grow, and flourish, and by-and-by split the rock, the simple truths of the Bible, without a human tongue to expound and enforce them, have often taken root, and brought forth amazing fruit, to God's sole glory. It was through a copy of the New Testament, found floating in the waters of the Bay of Yeddo, that the Gospel re-entered Japan, and created the first band of disciples—the nucleus of the future Church—when as yet no Christian teacher was permitted to enter, and the profession of Christianity was prohibited on pain of death.

Need I, finally, in this plea for the power of the Bible, go further than its

BLESSED RESULTS TO OURSELVES?

What do *we* not owe to the Bible, and to the Gospel which it brings? I have spoken already of civil blessings; I look now only to the spiritual. Our innumerable churches, our Sabbath rest and privileges, the religion whose power inspires so much earnest life, and so much noble work, the blessed effects of that religion in peace, in strength, in moral impulse in the minds that possess it, the comfort it dispenses in trial, and the joy and triumph it gives in death—all this is the fruit of the message of the Bible. Whatever blessings or hopes we can trace to our Christian faith; whatever light it imparts to our minds, or cheer to our hearts; whatever power there is in it to sustain holiness or conquer sin—all this we owe to the fact that Jesus came, and lived, and died, and rose again, and has given us of His Spirit; and that we have the Bible in our hands to tell us that He did it, and what He expects us to be and do as His disciples.

Here I close these papers. Surveying the whole road we have travelled, am I not entitled to claim that

THE ROCK OF GOD'S TRUTH

stands fast, and that Jesus, His Gospel, and the Book that sets forth both, are still, let men gainsay as they will, the spiritual powers that hold in them the hope of the world's future. Christ's reign is not ending. It will endure. In many ways, voluntary or involuntary, His supremacy is owned by the very persons who most loudly dispute His claims.

In Browning's poem,

"CHRISTMAS EVE,"

we are introduced to a German Professor, who, after having in the usual way resolved the life of Jesus into

myth, suddenly changes his tone completely. "Admire we," the poet says, how—

"When the Critic had done his best,
And the pearl of price, at reason's test,
Lay dust and ashes levigable
On the Professor's lecture table,—
When we looked for the inference and monition
That our faith, reduced to such condition,
Be swept forthwith to its natural dust-hole,—
He bids us, when we least expect it,
Take back our faith,—if it be not just whole. . . .
'Go home and venerate the myth
'I thus have experimented with—
'This man, continue to adore Him
'Rather than all who went before Him,
'And all who ever followed after!'"

Thus paradoxically does even unbelief confirm the Scripture statement that God has given Jesus "the name which is above every name"* (Phil. ii. 9). Christ's own Church, with more consistency, echoes the confession. But so long as Christ, in His self-attesting power, commands the allegiance of believing hearts, the Bible, which contains the priceless treasure of God's Word regarding Him, will remain in undimmed honour. It will be read, prized, and studied by devout minds, while the world lasts.

*It would be easy to collect striking testimonies to the moral and spiritual supremacy of Jesus from those who deny His supernatural claims. Mr. Blatchford's holding up of Christ as the ideal has already been remarked on. I notice that in my copy of his book, *God and My Neighbour*, the pronouns referring to Christ are printed with capitals ("He," "Him," "His," &c.). A copy of the *Clarion* I bought a year ago proved to be a "Christmas Number"! Even in dating his letters and papers by the year of our Lord, the unbeliever unwittingly shows that for him also history is divided into two great sections—before and after Christ.

Appendix

Appendix*

PROF. G. A. SMITH ON "RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM."

A STRIKING corroboration of the statement that the "shaking" in Old Testament criticism is not all in one direction is furnished by the able article on "Recent Developments of Old Testament Criticism" in the January number of the *Quarterly Review*, from the pen of Dr. G. A. Smith. Eighteen or twenty years ago, Dr. Smith says, everything was thought to be tolerably well settled. Now, apparently, it is mostly all unsettled again, except as to the main facts of the analysis, and perhaps the exilic date of the priestly law (the latter a view which seems to be to the present writer demonstrably untenable). With three-fourths of the article one can express hearty agreement. The criticism of Dr. Cheyne, who "stalks through the Negeb and Northern Arabia, sowing forests on the hills, and lifting kingdoms from the sand," of the new textual criticism of the poetical and prophetical books, "through which it drives like a great ploughshare, turning up the whole surface, and menacing not only the minor landmarks, but, in the case of the prophets, the main outlines of the field as

*Reprinted by permission from an article on "Things that Remain," by the present writer, in *The Churchman* for March, 1907.

well," and of the new and revolutionary Babylonian school of Winckler, is trenchant and successful. It is a large admission when the writer allows that Wellhausen and Professor Robertson Smith were wrong about the dates of the patriarchal narratives, and signifies his adhesion to Gunkel in carrying back these narratives to 1200 B.C. Gunkel may still regard the narratives as legendary—though he "has shown that we must read in them the style, the ideas, and the historical conditions of the ages before Moses"—but we are certain that, if Dr. Smith applied his pen to the task, he could as effectively dispose of Gunkel's fantastic theory of the origin of the "legends" as he has done in the case of Winckler's hypothesis that the prophets were the kept agents of foreign powers. Stories such as we have about the patriarchs, with their depth of meaning, and penetration with promise and purpose, are not the kind of thing that legend produces.

Larger results follow from the range of these admissions than appear in the article. If the patriarchal narratives existed in 1200 B.C., who will certify that they may not have existed much earlier? If they existed then, why could they not be written then? (The article has little to say on the recent discoveries on the early development of writing.) The chief reasons for the ordinary dating of J and E fall to the ground if the narratives, as Gunkel thinks, have no mirroring of events after 900. Or, again, if the narratives go back to 1200, how far are we supposed to be from the Exodus? If the Rameses II. theory of the Oppression is maintained, the Exodus will fall, in the opinion of recent scholars, not earlier than about 1230 or 1250. Dr. Smith may put it a little sooner. In any case, on this view 1200 B.C. takes us back so nearly to the Mosaic age that the difference hardly seems worth fighting for.

Appendix

In the article some friendly criticisms are offered on the present writer's volume on the Old Testament, and certain objections are mentioned to the early date of the Deuteronomic and Levitical legislation there maintained which are thought to be "insuperable." A word may be said on these in concluding. They may not leave the same impression of "insuperableness" on other minds.

The objections (specified) are three in all: 1. That Elijah "repaired" and sacrificed at the altars of Jehovah —this in disproof of the existence of the law of a central altar (Deut. xii.). But one may well ask: What was Elijah to do after the complete suspension of political and religious relations between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms which ensued almost immediately after the house of Jehovah had been built? What could he do, or would he be likely to do, but just what is narrated—fall back on the simpler forms of worship that previously had prevailed? The repairing of the altars of Jehovah does not show, at least, much sympathy with the calf-worship, the flocking to the shrines of which was probably the cause of neglect of the altars.

2. That Jeremiah states (vii. 22) that Jehovah gave no commands to Israel concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices—this in proof that, if the Levitical laws were extant in Jeremiah's time, he was ignorant of them. But this surely is a large and impossible inference from a passage that can quite easily be understood in a less absolute way. It involves the view that Jeremiah did not know (or accept) Deuteronomy in a form which included chapter xii. ("all that I command you," ver. 11); it overlooks that it is not the Levitical laws only that command and regulate sacrifice—surely Jeremiah knew the Book of the Covenant (Cf. Exod. xx. 24, xxiii. 18), and was not ignorant of the sacrifices at the making of the covenant

(Cf. Exod. xxiv. 5-8)—and it is contradicted by the fact that Jeremiah, like other prophets, himself pictures sacrifices and offerings as part of the order of the perfected theocracy (xvii. 26; Cf. xxxiii. 17, 18). In any case, is it not true, according to the Pentateuch itself, that when God brought the people out of Egypt, and made His covenant with them, the stress was laid primarily on moral obedience (Exod. xix. 5, xx., xxiv. 7), and that the Levitical sacrifices had a secondary place?

3. A special disproof of the existence of the Levitical law is found in the narrative of the sins of Eli's sons in 1 Sam. ii. "The demand of these sons of Belial, as the narrative calls them [to have the flesh given to them raw], is the very thing that Leviticus enjoins." But is this criticism cogent? First, the rendering probably needs to be amended. Instead of, "And the custom of the priests with the people was that," etc. (ver. 13), the rendering of the Revised Version margin, "They knew not the Lord, nor the due [right] of the priests from the people," has the balance of scholarly opinion in its favour. It is the rendering adopted or preferred by Wellhausen, Nowack, Klostermann, Van Hoonacker, H. P. Smith, Driver, etc. Then, the practice of the sons of Eli in taking their portion of the sacrifice with a hook out of the pot in which it was boiling falls into its place as an abuse. When contradiction is found in their demand to have their portion given to them "raw"—which was the thing the law contemplated—the accent is laid in the wrong place. The quarrel of the people with the priests was that the priests refused to burn the fat on the altar before claiming or seizing their portion. They seem to have been willing to give the priests their portion in any form desired—why should they not?—provided the fat was first burned (ver. 16). The "sons of Belial" refused, and helped themselves by violence when the flesh was

being cooked. So far from contradicting the Levitical law, the passage testifies—(1) to a "right" or "due" of the priests from the people, (2) to the fact that portions were assigned them from the sacrifices, and (3) to a law requiring them to burn the fat before doing anything else. There was certainly no Levitical law entitling them to neglect or postpone the burning of the fat.

It looks as if the existence of the ritual laws, instead of being overthrown, was very clearly established.

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